Saturday, March 12, 2016

THE PINK

65p

Supporting local sport Daily Echo

P65p ISSN 0969-56X3

ISSN 0969-563X

Published by Newsquest Media (Southern) Ltd and printed at Newsquest (Southern) Ltd, from the offics at Newspaper House, Redbridge, Southampton, S016 9JX. Telephone 023 8042 4800. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper. 126th year.

Cherries' huge step to safety

See report on page 6

dailyecho.co.uk/sport

Tubbs is spot on ...

Eastleigh beat Chester - see page 5

RULE BRITANNIA!

Two-goal Pelle ends drought in style as Saints keep Euro dream alive - pages 3/4

twitter
@saintstravel

SOUTHAMPTON AWAY TRAVEL

Taking Saints fans away for the past 5 seasons!

LEICESTER V SAINTS 3RD APRIL £23.95

Entertainment & 4G Wifi on Board. Free Food & Drink.

Now with reclining seats & extra leg room

Travel in comfort by coach and arrive in style from Southampton to your designated Football away match venue. Arrive at least 90 minutes before kick-off. Pick-up points from Holton Heath, Ringwood, Marchwood, Totton, Southampton Central, Stadium, Fleming Park & Winchester, Chieveley.

Website relaunched!

4G Wifi On Board

For more details on how to purchase your ticket, contact:

07801867365 (Nick) • www.southamptonawaytravel.co.uk

Southampton Away Travel

4G

Celebrating our 100% Academy pass rate

RICHARD TAUNTON
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

SOUTHAMPTON 1760

Open Evening

Thursday 28th April 2016

Come and find out why we're a great place to learn

Hosts of the annual Big Bang! STEM event

Rock Challenge national award winners

Winners of Music for Youth's Innovation Award

Pioneers of Hampshire's first Boxing Academy

www.richardtaunton.ac.uk
02380 511811
Hill Lane, Southampton, SO15 5RL

Stoke City 1 Southampton 2

Pelle at the double as Saints stun Potters

Graziano Pelle celebrates his second goal.

Graziano Pelle's first goals since November put Saints back in the race for European football as they defeated Stoke 2-1 at the Britannia Stadium.

The Italian striker bagged two first half goals to seal the win, with Marko Arnautovic pulling one back in the second period before Saints were reduced to ten men late on with Sadio Mane sent off 15 minutes after coming on as a sub, ***writes ADAM LEITCH.***

Victory lifted Saints above Stoke and up to seventh in the table, ending a run which had seen them pick up just one point from the previous three games.

Stoke came out looking purposeful and Giannelli Imbula typified that as with just two minutes gone he ran half the length of the pitch before shooting from 20 yards out but dragged his effort wide.

Saints were having to soak up a lot of early Stoke pressure as the home side dominated possession and were grateful that Ibrahim Afellay's well struck shot from inside the area hit Virgil van Dijk and went safe.

Flicked header

Out of nowhere Saints almost took the lead on ten minutes as Shane Long whipped in a right footed cross from the left that was met by a flicked header from Graziano Pelle ten yards out but Jack Butland dived to tip it over the bar.

However, he was helpless to stop the Italian striker netting from the resulting corner.

Steven Davis curled it in from the left and Pelle nipped in front of several Stoke players to this time flick a near post header from six yards out that went through Butland before he could react.

It could have been 2-0 three minutes later as Shane Long bent his run to beat the offside trap and found himself one-on-one with Butland.

Graziano Pelle heads Saints into the lead.
All pictures by Chris Moorhouse.

TEAM CHECK

- **Ryan Bertrand was moved to centre half in a back four by Saints boss Ronald Koeman as his side travelled to Stoke.**
- **The England international left back, who has also played as a left-sided centre half in a back three in recent months, partnered Virgil van Dijk with Jose Fonte missing through suspension and Maya Yoshida on the bench. Matt Targett started at left back.**
- **Ten-goal top scorer Shane Long was fit to return after his knee problem, with Sadio Mane amongst the subs.**
- **Victor Wanyama was serving the last game of his five match ban.**
- **Saints: Forster, Martina, van Dijk, Bertrand, Targett, Romeu, Clasie, S Davis, Long, Tadic, Pelle.**
- **Subs: Stekelenburg, Yoshida, Cedric, Reed, Ward-Prowse, Juanmi, Mane.**
- **Stoke: Butland, Cameron, Shawcross, Wollscheid, Pieters, Whelan, Imbula, Shaqiri, Afellay, Arnautovic, Diouf.**
- **Subs: Haugaard, Muniesa, Ireland, Joselu, Walters, Crouch, Bojan.**

From a relatively tight angle to the right Long could only find the Stoke keeper who stood firm to make the save

Pressurising

The Saints goal really disrupted the pattern of the game. Suddenly, Stoke were not looking so confident or assured on the ball, with Saints pressurising them and regularly breaking up the play.

They paid the price for it too as Saints doubled their lead on the half hour mark.

Pelle retrieved an over hit Cuco Martina cross on the left wing and fed it to Dusan Tadic.

The striker continued his run into the box and Tadic fed him the ball. Pelle opened up his body to curl a shot towards the far corner which Butland got down to and really should have saved but didn't and it was 2-0

Continued on page 4

HAVE YOUR SAY ON SAINTS – COMMENT ONLINE AT www.dailyecho.co.uk

Stoke City 1 Southampton 2

Graziano ends goal drought with match-winning double

from page 3

Stoke made an immediate change with Bojan replacing Xherdan Shaqiri.

It didn't make much difference to their fortunes though.

They were suddenly very flat with Saints hassling them into mistakes and looking by far the more dangerous team with Tadic's skill and Long's pace off of Pelle a constant threat.

Saints should have put the game to bed in first half stoppage time but blew a golden opportunity.

Long broke away down the right and unselfishly squared to Tadic in the area.

Rather than hit it first time he brought the ball under control, and then jinked inside to create an open goal for him to aim at from inside the six yard box. However, inexplicably, he opted for another touch and his dithering meant he was challenged and Saints had to settle for a two goal lead at the break.

It took less than two minutes of the second period for referee Lee Mason to produce the first yellow card of the match for a late challenge by Jordy Clasie.

Blow

Saints were dealt a blow though as Stoke pulled one back on 52 minutes.

Afellay was allowed time to play in a low cross from the left which was met by a darting run from Marko Arnautovic. He got to the ball ahead of van Dijk and turned home first time past Fraser Forster from close range at the near post.

Erik Pieters was the next in the book for a foul on Steven Davis.

Forster had to make his first real save of the game on 58 minutes as Arnautovic spun Martina and fired in a fierce shot from just inside the area but it was central and the Saints stopper parried it away.

Stoke were in control of the game once again, suddenly rampant as they looked for an equaliser while Saints were looking shaky.

Only a great block from van Dijk prevented Mame Diouf from testing Forster again.

Saints made their first change to try and get greater control of the game on 69 minutes with James Ward-Prowse replacing Clasie.

Appealed

Tadic appealed desperately for a penalty five minutes later as he went down in the box, going over Butland's leg as he came off his line to try and close him down.

Referee Mason appeared to look long and hard at it before awarding a goal kick.

That was the last action for Tadic as he was replaced by Sadio Mane.

Stoke responded with former Saints striker Peter Crouch coming on for Glenn Whelan as they prepared to go long in search of a goal.

Saints then brought on Maya Yoshida at centre half with Matt Targett coming off and Ryan Bertrand moving to left back.

Ward-Prowse so nearly sealed the Saints win as he stepped up to hit a free kick 25 yards out just to the left of centre. It had plenty of curl on it and dipped after going over the wall.

Butland appeared totally beaten but the ball struck the crossbar and bounced back out.

The game took another twist moments into five minutes of added time as Mane was sent off.

Mason adjudged that he jumped into a challenge with Pieters leading with his arm and produced a straight red card.

However, it appeared that Mane made no contact with the head of Pieters with his arm and rather the Stoke man went down as their bodies came together.

Saints closed the game down well though and held out to take a deserved three points.

Saints celebrate Graziano Pelle's first goal.

Graziano Pelle slides in to make it 2-0.

Koeman hails huge success

RONALD Koeman hailed his side's "huge" win over Stoke and confirmed Saints will appeal Sadio Mane's red card.

Saints climbed above their hosts with a 2-1 victory at the Britannia Stadium thanks to two goals from Graziano Pelle.

It put them right back in the frame for European qualification, much to Koeman's delight.

He said: "It is a huge win against a strong Stoke, playing at home a difficult place to come.

"We spoke to the players about today and next week (against Liverpool) that will mark our situation until the end of the season.

Great response

"Great response of the reaction of the players. Really well deserved three points.

"We made it difficult for ourselves because we didn't score a big chance before half time and then it's 3-0 up and of course we expect a different Stoke second half.

"After the 2-1 I was worried but I think we had a great reaction on the pitch.

"Back in control of the game, the better chances and until the last second very emotional.

"Some decisions not decisions for us and then I talk about the penalty and the red card but still three points and well deserved."

The only sour note of the game was that red card for Mane, which came at the start of stoppage time just 15 minutes after he had come on as a sub.

Mane ran towards Erik Pieters with both players jumping to win the ball

Momentum

Mane's momentum knocked Pieters over and referee Lee Mason gave him a straight red card, presumably thinking he had led with his elbow.

Koeman confirmed Saints will appeal.

"The red card is a big mistake of the referee or maybe the fourth referee or the linesman," he said.

"Sadio is trying to put his head to the ball, Pieters is doing the same and Pieters told me after the same and we will appeal against that red card."

● Don't miss Monday's Daily Echo for the best Stoke v Saints coverage.

Ronald Koeman

Eastleigh 1 Chester 0

Tubbs grabs first Spitfires goal to keep dream alive

MATT Tubbs scored his first Eastleigh goal to ensure Chris Todd's side's dominant display was rewarded with three priceless points against a spirited Chester.

The Spitfires would - and should - have won by more, but for a mix of their own profligacy and some wonderful Chester goalkeeping and backs-to-the wall defending, ***writes PAUL McNAMARA.***

The game's decisive moment arrived on 70 minutes, when Tubbs chipped in a delicious 'Panenka' penalty after Yemi Odubade had been hauled down by visiting defender Ryan Astles.

A second win inside four days for Todd's men, following Tuesday's victory over Woking, leaves them just two points off fifth spot in the National League.

Chester were quickly on the back foot, here, despite striker Ross Hannah having an early 'goal' wiped out for offside.

Matt Tubbs celebrates his match-winning penalty.

Josh Payne shoots during Eastleigh's win. Pictures by James Newell.

Thumped

The Spitfires came agonisingly close to forging a 13th minute breakthrough. Luke Coulson darted onto Johnny Hunt's weak clearance to unleash a 25-yard effort that thumped against the bar. Odubade was first to the rebound but, with the goal at his mercy, the Eastleigh striker could only skew wide of the target.

Tony Thompson was called into action for the first time just short of the half-hour mark. Lee Cook's right-wing corner sparked a melee in the visitors' box, with a Jai Reason strike blocked, before the ball landed for Will Evans to hit a shot that full-stretch Chester 'keeper Thompson turned behind.

Thompson was soon repelling Josh Payne's hard-hit, wickedly moving 18-yard drive, with the increasingly busy former Morecambe stopper then punching away an Odubade volley, after Reason's delightful chip had released the striker.

Last-ditch

Payne and Evans were both denied by more last-ditch Chester defending following another teasing Cook corner, with Thompson completing his side's escape by saving point-blank from Odubade's diving header.

Normal service was resumed three minutes after the break. Coulson powered forward to square for Reason. The attacker's initial effort struck Ben Heneghan, but Reason swiftly recycled possession left to Cook, whose low drive beat Thompson, but not Hunt, heroically scrambling back to clear from the line.

Left-back Hunt repeated the trick two minutes later, this time rising to clear Evans' towering header from Cook's corner.

It was down to Tubbs' strength that the hosts finally forged ahead. The diminutive attacker seemed sure to lose out to the imposing Heneghan, when Dan Harding lofted a delivery into the box, but the ex-Crawley man did enough to force the ball on for Odubade, who was impeded by Astles as he pulled the trigger.

Referee David Rock didn't hesitate in pointing to the spot and Tubbs, sumptuously, did the rest.

Eastleigh piled forward in search of a killer second, but to no avail.

Cushioned

Tubbs cushioned volley was kept out by Thompson, diving to his left, and Reason had a drive deflected wide.

Then came the visitors' late rally Heneghan headed over from Ryan Higgins' delivery, while sub Tom Shaw could only fire wastefully off-target after Evans' clearance ricocheted off Hannah and into the advancing midfielder's path.

Another Chester sub, Craig Hobson, thought he should have had a penalty for Partington's challenge under Higgins' high-cross but, ultimately, the Spitfires' Portsmouth loanee's prowess from 12-yards won the day for his team.

SATURDAY'S RESULTS

THE FA TROPHY
Bognor Regis Town 0 Grimsby 1
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
Basingstoke 1 Havant & Waterlooville 1
Bath City 1 Ebbsfleet 1
Bishops Stortford 1 Eastbourne Borough 1
Chelmsford 4 Maidenhead 1
Dartford 2 Whitehawk 4
Gosport Borough 2 Concord Rangers 3
Hayes & Yeading 1 St Albans 3
Hemel Hempstead 2 Truro 1
Margate 0 Oxford City 2
Sutton 0 Weston-s-Mare 0
Wealdstone 2 Maidstone 2
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division
Bedworth 1 Merthyr 2
Bideford 0 Dunstable 0
Biggleswade 2 Chesham 2
Cambridge City 0 Kettering 4
Chippenham 1 Hitchin 1
Histon 1 Frome 3
Hungerford 1 Cirencester 2
Kings Lynn 1 Dorchester 2
Leamington 1 Poole 0
Paulton Rovers 0 Redditch 5
St Neots 0 Slough 0
Weymouth 2 Stratford 1
Division One South & West
AFC Totton 2 North Leigh 1
Burnham 2 Cinderford 3
Didcot 7 Bashley 0
Evesham 3 Tiverton 2
Larkhall Athletic 1 Bishops Cleeve 0
Mangotsfield 5 Bridgwater 1
Shortwood 1 Marlow 2
Slimbridge 1 Banbury 3
Taunton 3 Yate 1
Wantage 0 Winchester City 3
Wimborne 1 Swindon Supermarine 2
FA VASE, semi-final, first leg
Hereford 1 Salisbury 0
Bowers & Pitsea 2 Morpeth Town 2
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
SWL Cup, third round
Moneyfield 1 Portland United 2
Premier Division
Alresford 2 Verwood 3
Andover 2 Hamworthy United 1
Blackfield & Langley 3 Brockenhurst 0
Bournemouth Poppies 3 Fawley 0
Cowes Sport 1 AFC Portchester 0
Folland Sports 0 Whitchurch 2
Lymington Town 3 Horndean 1
Newport IoW 1 Bemerton HH 0
Team Solent 2 Sholing 1
Division 1
AFC Stoneham 5 Christchurch 0
Alton 3 Laverstock & Ford 2
Amesbury 4 Romsey 1
Andover NS 3 Hythe & Dibden 1
Fleet Spurs 3 East Cowes Vics 0
New Milton 0 Ringwood 2
Pewsey Vale 1 US Portsmouth 3
Tadley Calleva 1 Downton 0
PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE
PREMIER LEAGUE
Premier Division
Clanfield 0 Otterbourne 2
Colden Common 0 Infinity 3
Hamble Club 3 Fleetlands 1
Headley United 3 Bush Hill 4
Hedge End Rangers 0 Baffins MR 4
Liss Athletic pp Stockbridge
Locks Heath 3 Liphook 1
Overton 3 Winchester Castle 2
QK Southampton 2 Paulsgrove 1
Division 1
Andover Lions pp Netley Central
Broughton 2 AFC Petersfield 2
Four Marks 0 Upham 2
Hayling United 1 Lyndhurst 0
Michelmersh & Timsbury 0 Sway 4
Combination East
AFC Petersfield 1 Headley 0
Baffins MR 2 Hayling United 0
Liphook 0 Liss 6
Combination West
Bush Hill 0 Overton 2
Hamble Club 2 Otterbourne 1
Winchester Castle 7 QK Southampton 1
WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE
Premier Division
AFC Portchester 0 Moneyfield 2
Petersfield Town 2 US Portsmouth 3
Sholing pp Wimborne Town
Division One
Bashley 0 Alresford 1
Fawley 0 Alton 2
Hythe & Dibden 0 AFC Stoneham 1
Laverstock & Ford 1 Tadley Calleva 2
Totton & Eling 2 Verwood Town 0
DREW SMITH SOUTHAMPTON LEAGUE
Senior League Cup, semi-final:
BTC Soton 6 Bishops Waltham Dyn 1
Junior League Cup, semi-final
Nursling Res 2 Athletico Romsey 1
Supplementary Cup, quarter-final
Durley 1 Capital 3
Braishfield v Michelmersh & T Res (Late kick-off)
Senior 1:
AFC Botley 3 Park Sports 1
Comrades Res 1 Montefiore Halls 4

AFC Bournemouth 3 Swansea City 2

Cherries almost safe after see-saw win over Swans

CHERRIES took another significant step towards securing their Premier League status with victory in a see-saw contest.

Eddie Howe's team took the lead on no fewer than three occasions, only to be pegged back twice – with Steve Cook's header eventually winning the day for the hosts, ***writes NEIL PERRETT.***

Victory, Cherries' third in succession, took them into 13th place – 13 points clear of the relegation zone.

Cherries opened the scoring when Max Gradel bagged his maiden Premier League goal after 37 minutes.

The winger seized on the loose ball after a combination of Swans goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski and defender Angel Rangel had parried Adam Smith's cross to him.

However, the hosts' lead lasted barely two minutes as a fine individual effort from Modou Barrow restored parity for the visitors.

The Gambian cut in from the right flank before beating Artur Boruc with a precision left-foot finish.

Josh King netted his second goal in as many games to restore Cherries' lead five minutes into the second half, the striker firing emphatically past Fabianski.

But the visitors again came back when Sigurdsson equalised midway through the second period before Cook headed Cherries into the lead for a third time 12 minutes from the end.

Boss Eddie Howe named an unchanged starting line-up following Cherries' 3-1 victory at Newcastle, with Juan Iturbe restored to the bench at the expense of Glenn Murray.

Joshua King, who netted his first Cherries goal in the 2-2 draw at the Liberty in November, went close to drawing first blood after just 129 seconds.

But after outjumping his marker and meeting Gradel's hanging cross, the Norwegian saw his header just clear the crossbar.

Wayne Routledge failed to test Boruc after a free-kick had found him on the edge of the box, the Swans man also firing over the crossbar.

King lifted a better chance over the top after nine minutes, the striker unable to keep down his shot after Benik Afobe had helped on a Charlie Daniels cross.

Cherries were denied by the post when Andrew Surman rolled a free-kick to Matt Ritchie who teed up his team-mate for a shot which thudded against the upright.

Gylfi Sigurdsson's run from near the halfway line ended with him dragging a left-foot shot past the post before Swans goalkeeper Fabianski was forced to push Ritchie's free-kick over the top.

Gradel fired Cherries into the lead after 37 minutes when he was on hand to sweep home the loose ball after Fabianski and Rangel had parried Smith's cross into his path.

However, Cherries' lead was short-lived as Barrow stepped inside from near the touchline, danced across the top of the 18-yard box and finished low into the bottom corner just two minutes later.

King restored Cherries' advantage early in the second half, the striker rifling home his fifth goal of the season after being teed up by Gradel's pass.

Swansea hit back for a second time when Sigurdsson made the most of some ponderous defending to level after 62 minutes.

The Icelandic international fired home unopposed from close range after Cherries had allowed Barrow's low cross to reach him.

And Cherries were then thankful to Boruc's brave save, the Pole diving at the feet of Alberto Paloschi to turn his effort away for a corner.

Boruc also pulled off a fine reaction save to beat away another shot from Paloschi before King was denied a second by Ashley Williams's timely challenge.

From the resultant corner taken short by Marc Pugh, Ritchie delivered a teasing cross to the far post where Cook climbed above Federico Fernandez to guide his header into the back of the net as Cherries took the lead for the third time after 78 minutes.

Cherries: Boruc, Smith, Francis, Cook, Daniels, Gradel (Pugh, 76), Surman, Gosling (O'Kane, h-t), Ritchie, King, Afobe (Grabban, 65).
Swans: Fabianski, Rangel, Williams, Fernandez, Taylor, Cork, Fer (Ki, 84), Barrow (Emnes, 80), Sigurdsson, Routledge (Gomis, 60), Paloschi.
Referee: Roger East (Wiltshire).
Attendance: 11,179 (1,337).

Max Gradel fires Cherries into the lead for the first time

AFC Bournemouth's Joshua King (right) celebrates scoring his side's second goal of the game against Swansea.

Wonder goal from Watts

AFC TOTTON overcame a dodgy start to jolt North Leigh's Southern One South & West play-off hosts with a 2-1 win at a sun-drenched Testwood Stadium, *writes WENDY GEE.*

With Mike Gosney serving a two-match ban for ten bookings, Mark Lilley came into the Totton side along with returning centre-back Pat Wilson.

Unlike last week, when the Stags raced into an early lead at Tiverton, this time they began sluggishly and fell behind in the fourth minutes following lax defending from a free-kick.

Distracted perhaps by a change of match ball, they switched-off as Jamie Cook delivered from the right and Lance WILLIAMS met it with a thumping downward header which bounced past Totton keeper Steve Mowthorpe.

With Totton all over the place defensively early on, John Else hit a half-volley straight at Mowthorpe and George Seacole had a penalty appeal turned down before twice rolling efforts past the Totton keeper's right-hand post.

The Stags' only early opportunity was a Nick Watts cross from the right which flashed inches over Nathaniel Sherborne's head.

It wasn't until the 27th minute that the home crowd had reason to hope again when a neat move saw Watts slide a pass through to Neil Williams. But defender Lewis White got across to prevent the midfielder making a decent connection with his shot.

That prompted a decent spell of pressure from the home side with ex-Eastleigh midfielder Jack Alexander bursting in from the right and forcing North Leigh keeper Ben Taylor into his first save.

Then, on the half-hour, Watts moved inside and drove an arrowed shot wide from the edge of the area.

This time it was the visitors' defence that was looking uncomfortable and they too succumbed to a free-kick as Totton's pressure culminated in a deserved 34th minute equaliser.

Watts flighted the ball in from deep on the left SHERBORNE rose high to net a back-post header.

Apart from Mowthorpe's point blank save with his legs from Seacole, Totton looked the likeliest to score again.

Lilley and Sherborne both threatened before the excellent Watts profited when the ball bounced of Leigh's Morgan Williams midway inside the visitors' half. The No. 7 raced on and unleashed a shot which was well turned-over by Taylor.

Six minutes into the second-half the game ground to an unexpected halt when referee Iain Parsons, who had been feeling unwell before kick-off, said he could not continue.

An announcement was made to find a new official and, with no-one forthcoming, North Leigh assistant manager Terry Merriman stepped in to run the line and the game continued after a six minute stoppage with assistant Nigel Sykes in charge.

On 65 minutes, Totton seized the lead with a wonder strike from WATTS.

In space on the right, he deceived keeper Taylor with a strike that sailed into the far top corner from 25-yards.

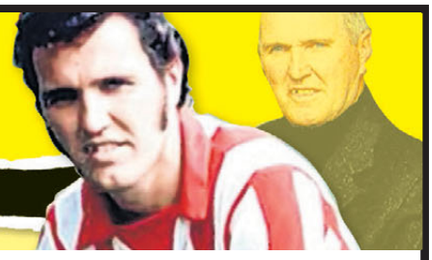
The visitors, captained by ex-Salisbury midfielder Wayne Turk, might have conceded again when Williams burst free, but he blasted straight at the keeper.

Taylor finger-tipped away Mark Gamble's crisp 30-yard free-kick before the Stags were unlucky when both sub Dylan Knight and Gamble headed against the bar following a corner.

AFC TOTTON 2
NORTH LEIGH 1

Paine's World

The Saints legend's EXCLUSIVE column on all things football



Time for Liverpool to stop their gambling

ANOTHER underwhelming season, another summer transfer window, another rebuild at Liverpool.

Practically ever since the Premier League's incarnation in 1992, Liverpool have transitioned from one team failing to meet expectations to another at considerable cost in the transfer market, but that trend has escalated drastically under owner John W. Henry and of course, the Reds' much-maligned transfer committee.

Indeed, from the start of the 2010/11 campaign, in which Henry took ownership around three months in, the Reds have spent nearly £435m on 53 players, only 24 of which have not since been sold or are currently out on loan, whilst parting with a whopping 78.

That's an enormous turnover of playing personnel when compared to those who consistently finish above Liverpool in the Premier League table — the likes of Arsenal, Manchester City and Manchester United — and has surely caused more problems than it's solved.

After all, can any club expect consistent success without continuity in the first team squad?

Vincent Kompany, David Silva, Yaya Toure, Pablo Zabaleta and Aleksandar Kolorov were some of City's earliest investments following the Sheikh takeover, the vast majority of Arsenal's FA Cup-winning Champions League guarantors have been with the club for four years or more, and the Class of '92 served as a bedrock for United's dominance under Sir Alex Ferguson.

Yet, with a new manager at the helm in Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool are already preparing for a summer overhaul — in fact, they've already made one signing in Bosman recruit, Joel Matip.

That's in some ways inevitable and certainly not unexpected; most fresh appointments work cart blanche during their inaugural summer window, liquefying the squad before remoulding it in their own image, and Klopp's reputation from his Bundesliga-winning tenure at Dortmund obliges the Liverpool hierarchy to allow him such freedom.

Signings like Mats Hummels, Neven Subotic, Ilkay Gundogan, Marco Reus and Robert Lewandowski tell all about the Liverpool gaffer's eye for a promising talent.

But Liverpool's approach in the transfer market remains obvious. Perhaps a symptom of the committee, composed of five men who all have their own ideas on potential signings as well as the manager, perhaps because the Reds have found themselves excluded from the top end of the transfer market over the last decade, the Merseysiders have consistently favoured quantity over quality.

There is some logic to that way of thinking. After all, if you can't afford Mesut Ozil's £42million transfer fee and enormous wages, why not buy three players who have been tipped to become the next Mesut Ozil at a cost of £10million each, pay them considerably less and hope at least one eventually lives up to their heralded potential?

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp with two expensive signings in former Saints stars Adam Lallana and Dejan Lovren

But Liverpool are trapped in a cycle that needs to be broken if they're going to battle their way back to regular Champions League football, even if it comes at the expense of success during Klopp's first full season in charge. Indeed, the coming transfer window is the one in which quality must begin to take precedent for Liverpool.

After all, despite condemnation otherwise from the media, the current Liverpool roster is by no means incapable. James Milner, Jordan Henderson, Emre Can, Philippe Coutinho, Roberto Firmino and Daniel Sturridge provide the basis for a strong starting XI that could realistically contend for fourth spot, although the back five admittedly requires a significant makeover.

Once again, however, that doesn't have to take place in a single transfer window. Although the pressure for success remains relentless in the Premier League, patience in the transfer market will pay off for Liverpool with Klopp at the helm. The German gaffer offers that pull factor Brendan Rodgers always lacked and given time, will be able attract those 'marquee' names that relentlessly evaded his predecessor.

No doubt, Klopp too will feel the pressure to make wholesale changes this summer. A number of players, Christian Benteke being the predominant example, seem incompatible with the philosophy he's brought from Borussia Dortmund. But evolution can be more effective than revolution when executed properly and revolution thus far, at least in terms of playing personnel, has only seen Liverpool drift further away from top tier European football.

With a top-class manager finally at the helm and a reported £100m budget at his disposal, it's time for Liverpool to concentrate their recruitment on individuals who will improve the starting XI, rather than inflating the squad with speculative gambles.

Adam Rant

The week's big talking points with ADAM LEITCH

Sorry Newcastle paying the price

Magpies are a shadow of their former selves

SOMETIMES you cannot help but a feel that a club deserves to get relegated.

It's not until you realise the impact it has on people who are largely blameless in the mess they are in that it becomes clear just how badly they have gone wrong.

Newcastle are in this position right now.

The legendary passion of Tyneside, the memories of the Kevin Keegan era and all that romance mean they do hold a little place in the hearts of many football fans, beyond their madly fanatical supporters.

But it really feels that the club as it once was is a mile away from what they are now.

Since Mike Ashley took charge they seem to have lurched from one crisis to another. At least, that's how it feels.

Now they are mired in the bottom three with just nine games to go to try and save themselves.

Nobody truly knows everything that goes on at a club, particularly when looking in from afar, but it is ludicrous they have got themselves into this predicament.

It seems as if there has been a massive failure of management from the top downwards, and that much of the structure of the club at the highest level is found wanting.

In modern day football the manager will simply not have all the say when it comes to transfer dealings.

Old school bosses will shake their heads at this, but it's a fact of life.

Quite simply, the amount of money being spent on a fee and wages now do require more than one person to do some due diligence.

That is only right and proper, but it must be the manager who is the one driving things.

To have too many transfer committees, to have others involved too heavily, is a recipe for disaster.

Then comes the appointment of Steve McClaren. It always seemed like an odd fit for Newcastle.

Now some appointments work out and others don't, so you cannot perhaps criticise too much.

Most of the footballing public were in stitches when Leicester took the decision to make Claudio Ranieri their manager, but that is now being hailed as a move of absolute genius.

Louis van Gaal looked a good choice for Manchester United.

Steve McClaren has not enjoyed a happy time in charge of Newcastle

Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

The way the last week has played out though, with McClaren seemingly just waiting for Rafa Benitez to decide whether he wants to take his job or not, is, if the reports are correct, another blot on the Newcastle copybook.

It just shows a lack of decisiveness, and a lack of readiness too.

If you are going to make the decision, to make the change, make it quick, clean and as pain free as possible.

It just appears another sign of how Newcastle's approach at the very top of the club has gone badly wrong.

Ace must face ban

WHETHER Maria Sharapova's assertion that she was taking meldonium for medical, rather than performance-enhancing reasons is true or not, she has to be properly punished.

You have to start from the point of view that if what she says is correct then she, and her team, simply should have been aware of the change in the rules which banned it at the start of the year.

Sharapova has, apparently, been the highest-earning sportswoman in the world for each of the past 11 years. That means she has a team behind her and there is little excuse for them not being aware, as well as her.

Taken in a wider context though, part of the reason the drug was banned was that, according to the British Medical Journal, as many as almost 500 athletes at last year's European Games may have been taking Meldonium when it was still legal.

It seems very hard to believe that many people were all suffering from the problems that require it to be used for medical purposes.

Maybe Sharapova is hugely unlucky, but ultimately she needs to be treated with equality, and, sadly for tennis, that means a lengthy ban.

Maria Sharapova

Pressure on Foxes

IT REALLY is crunch time for Leicester.

They have stood up to every test that has been thrown at them, but now they are top with less than ten games to go, the pressure is going to really be on them.

We saw just a couple of seasons ago the effect it had on Liverpool, who looked like the title was theirs until they blew it in the home straight.

If it were, say, Manchester City in Leicester's position, people would be saying they had one hand on the trophy.

But you just don't know how they will react.

Everything has been positive so far, but the biggest tests of all are yet to come.

Non league FOOTBALL

Former clubs await City boss in cup final

THE second Tuesday in April will be a special one for Saints old boy Paul Masters when he leads Winchester City out at St Mary's in the final of the Hampshire FA Senior Cup.

Not only will he be returning to his one of his old clubs, but he will be facing another – Havant & Waterlooville – on the biggest night in the county's non-League calendar.

Masters, a gritty midfielder in his playing days, was an apprentice at Southampton and rubbed shoulders with Alan Shearer, Matt Le Tissier and the Wallace brothers in Saints reserves.

The former England youth international went on to carve out an excellent career in non-League football, much of it spent in the Portsmouth area with Havant Town and Waterlooville and, later, the two clubs combined.

When it comes to recounting his playing career, Masters is not blessed with the best of memories, but he said: "I looked it up and I played in the Senior Cup final three times – twice for Havant Town and once for Waterlooville.

"Havant won both finals against Farnborough when we were in the old Southern League then and Farnborough were in the Conference."

Winchester City are going to need another of those giant-killings if Masters is to get his hands on the trophy again on Tuesday, April 12.

Havant & Waterlooville are not having the best of seasons league-wise, but they ply their trade two tiers above City in the Vanarama National League South.

However, that gap could be narrowed – or even closed – next season, with the Hawks labouring just above the drop zone, while Winchester are pushing for promotion from the Southern One South & West.

Speaking after goals from Rob Flooks, Adam Tomasso and Warren Bentley had booked the Citizens their ticket to St Mary's with a 3-0 win at Fleet Town on Tuesday, Masters said: "It's going to be a good occasion for the whole club, from the chairman and committee right through to the loyal supporters.

"Our lads have been brilliant all season and it's a great opportunity for them to play good football on a nice pitch. Hopefully St Mary's will suit the way we play.

"We started really well against Fleet and scored from two set-pieces and we should really have been three or four up at half-time. They came at us second half, but Warren scored to kill the game off.

"Getting to the final is a good thing for the club and the players and I look forward to seeing how we cope against a side from that level."

Another ex-Saint, striker Matt Paterson, was on the mark for Havant & Waterlooville in their 2-0 semi-final win over VNLS rivals Basingstoke Town at Westleigh Park.

He and Shamir Mullings struck in the second half.

Winchester City manager Paul Masters

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Monday, March 14
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
Wealdstone v Hayes & Yeading.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Hungerford v Slough.
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: Team Solent v Folland Sports.

Tuesday, March 15
Champions League round of 16 second legs (1945): Atletico Madrid v PSV Eindhoven. Man City v Dynamo Kiev.
Sky Bet Championship (1945): Brighton v Reading. Hull v Nottm Forest. Ipswich v Blackburn.
League One: Fleetwood v Walsall. Oldham v Blackpool.
League Two: Newport v Hartlepool. Oxford v Dagenham & Redbridge.
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE
Braintree v Gateshead, Dover v Lincoln, Eastleigh v Bromley, Guiseley v Grimsby, Torquay v FC Halifax.
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
Bishops Stortford v Whitehawk, Hemel Hempstead v Chelmsford, Maidenhead v Dartford, Truro v Bath City, Weston-super-Mare v Maidstone.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Bideford v Weymouth, Chippenham v Chesham, Cirencester v Redditch, Kettering v Paulton, Leamington v Dorchester, Stratford v Hitchin.
Division One South & West: Mangotsfield v Marlow, Taunton v Didcot, Tiverton v Bishops Cleeve (7.30).
RUSSELL COTES CUP
Quarter-final: Blackfield & Langley v Fleet Town.
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: Alresford v Lymington, Fareham v Hamworthy, Horndean v Moneyfields, Newport IoW v AFC Portchester.
Division One: Christchurch v Andover NS, New Milton v Amesbury, Pewsey Vale v Tadley Calleva, Totton & Eling v Hythe & Dibden, US Portsmouth v Romsey Town.
PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE
Premier Division: Locks Heath v Infinity (7.30).

Wednesday, March 16
Champions League round of 16 second legs (1945): Barcelona v Arsenal. Bayern Munich v Juventus.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Division One South & West: Slimbridge v Cinderford.
Premier Division: Frome v St Neots.
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: Fawley AFC v Andover Town, Sholing v Bournemouth Poppies, Verwood v Brockenhurst.
Division One: AFC Stoneham v Laverstock & Ford.

Thursday, March 17
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: Blackfield & Langley v Team Solent.
ALDERSHOT SENIOR CUP
Quarter-final: Badshot Lea v Fleet Town.

Saturday, March 19
Barclays Premier League (1500 unless stated): Chelsea v West Ham. Crystal Palace v Leicester. Everton v Arsenal (1245). Swansea v Aston Villa (1730). Watford v Stoke. West Brom v Norwich.
Sky Bet Championship: Birmingham v Fulham. Brentford v Blackburn. Bristol City v Bolton. Burnley v Wolves. Derby v Nottm Forest (1230). Ipswich v Rotherham. Leeds v Huddersfield. Middlesbrough v Hull. MK Dons v Brighton. Preston v QPR. Reading v Cardiff. Sheff Wed v Charlton.
League One: Bury v Shrewsbury. Coventry v Swindon. Crewe v Blackpool. Doncaster v Peterborough. Fleetwood v Barnsley. Millwall v Sheff Utd. Oldham v Rochdale. Port Vale v Burton. Scunthorpe v Chesterfield. Southend v Gillingham. Walsall v Colchester. Wigan v Bradford.
League Two: AFC Wimbledon v York. Barnet v Oxford. Cambridge v Yeovil. Carlisle v Wycombe. Crawley v Hartlepool. Dagenham & Redbridge v Accrington. Leyton Orient v Morecambe. Mansfield v Portsmouth. Newport v Bristol Rovers (1230). Notts County v Exeter. Plymouth v Luton. Stevenage v Northampton.
FA TROPHY
Semi-final, second legs: FC Halifax v Nantwich, Grimsby Town v Bognor Regis.
FA VASE
Semi-final, second legs: Salisbury v Hereford, Morpeth Town v Bowers & Pitsea.
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE
Wrexham v Chester, Altrincham v Aldershot, Barrow v Bromley, Boreham Wood v Macclesfield, Braintree v Cheltenham, Guiseley v Dover, Lincoln v Kidderminster, Torquay v Southport, Tranmere v Forest Green, Welling v Gateshead.
VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE SOUTH
Bath City v Bishops Stortford, Concord v St Albans, Eastbourne Borough v Chelmsford, Ebbsfleet v Hemel Hempstead, Gosport Borough v Sutton, Havant & Waterlooville v Dartford, Maidenhead v Truro, Maidstone v Weston-super-Mare, Margate v Hayes & Yeading, Oxford City v Wealdstone, Whitehawk v Basingstoke.
EVO-STIK SOUTHERN LEAGUE
Premier Division: Chesham v Chippenham, Cirencester v Biggleswade, Dorchester v Leamington, Dunstable v Paulton, Frome v Kings Lynn, Hitchin v Bideford, Kettering v St Neots, Merthyr Town v Cambridge City, Poole Town v Bedworth, Redditch v Histon, Slough v Weymouth, Stratford v Hungerford.
Division One South & West: Banbury v Shortwood, Bashley v Slimbridge, Bishops Cleeve v AFC Totton, Bridgwater v Wantage, Cinderford v Evesham, Marlow v Larkhall, North Leigh v Mangotsfield, Swindon Supermarine v Burnham, Tiverton v Wimborne, Winchester City v Taunton, Yate v Didcot.
SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE
Premier Division: AFC Portchester v Horndean, Bemerton HH v Moneyfields, Blackfield & Langley v Newport IoW, Bournemouth Poppies v Fareham, Brockenhurst v Folland Sports, Fawley AFC v Lymington Town, Hamworthy Utd v Cowes Sports, Sholing v Alresford, Verwood v Andover Town, Whitchurch v Team Solent.
Division One: AFC Stoneham v Andover NS, Hythe & Dibden v Christchurch, Laverstock & Ford v Amesbury, Pewsey Vale v East Cowes Vics, Portland v Tadley Calleva, Romsey v Alton, Totton & Eling v Downton, US Portsmouth v Fleet Spurs.
PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE
Premier Division: Colden Common v Hedge End Rangers, Fleetlands v Locks Heath, Hamble Club v Bush Hill, Infinity v QK Southampton, Otterbourne v Clanfield, Overton v Liss Athletic, Paulsgrove v Headley Utd, Stockbridge v Liphook, Winchester Castle v Baffins Milton Rovers.
Division One: AFC Petersfield v Andover Lions, Hayling Utd v Broughton, Lyndhurst v Four Marks, Sway v Netley Central.
PEHPL Combination Cup, semi-final: Hamble Club v Hayling Utd (at Locks Heath, 2.30).
ALDERSHOT JUNIOR CUP
Semi-final: Liphook Utd Res v Hartley Wintney A.
Combination East: Baffins Milton Rovers v Fleetlands.
Combination West: Bush Hill v Otterbourne, Hedge End Rangers v Winchester Castle.

Buckingham Palace

Celebrate Her Majesty's 90th Birthday

2 days from £115.00, 20 August, 9 & 19 September 2016

Visit Buckingham Palace in 2016 and you will see the magnificent State Rooms and also 'Fashioning a Reign' Exhibition, a celebration of Her Majesty's 90th birthday.

Highlights & inclusions

- Admission to Buckingham Palace and the 'Fashioning a Reign' Exhibition
- 'Royal London' sightseeing tour
- Visit to Royal Windsor
- One night's three-star bed and full buffet breakfast hotel accommodation in the Heathrow/Slough area
- Coach travel from the local area
- Escorted by a friendly tour manager

Reader Offer

Newmarket Holidays

SOUTHERN Daily Echo

WINNER BRITISH TRAVEL AWARDS 2015 BEST LARGE ESCORTED TOURS HOLIDAY COMPANY

Call 0330 160 7751 QUOTE NCS

Visit www.newmarket.travel/ncs11438

These holidays are organised & operated by Newmarket Promotions Ltd. ABTA V787X. Subject to availability. Single supplements apply. Standard phone charges.

ABTA Travel with confidence

Non league FOOTBALL

Nathan Ashmore

Former Boro star keeps Gosport at bay on debut

THE good news for Gosport Borough last weekend was that they travelled to league leaders Ebbsfleet United with a financial weight lifted off their shoulders.

The bad news was that they returned from Kent 2-0 losers in the National League South, having been kept at bay by keeper Nathan Ashmore, the man they had sold to Fleet just a couple of days earlier.

But just to show there were no hard feelings, Borough gave their former stopper a lift back to Portsmouth on their team coach!

Although Ashmore's sale to Ebbsfleet for an undisclosed fee was not all about the money, it was a timely deal for the Privett Park outfit given their recent financial problems.

But the good news ahead of Saturday's trip was an announcement from manager Alex Pike that Gosport no longer owed money to HM Revenue & Customs.

Alas for Gosport, they did not bank any points as first-half goals from Danny Kedwell (penalty) and John-Paul Kissock settled the issue 2-0 in Ebbsfleet's favour.

Ashmore said: "It was interesting playing against my old team and I was glad to get it out of the way quickly."

Admitting it was "a weird day for all concerned", Gosport assistant boss Mick Catlin said: "Towards the end of the game I found myself shouting at Nathan, telling him to hurry up, before realising he was no longer on our side!"

FA Cup goalscorer Mohamed sent on loan to 'get games'

Silverlake move 'didn't work out' for wideman Kaid

KAID Mohamed has left Eastleigh to join Tamworth on loan for the rest of the season.

The experienced Welshman was signed amid a fanfare of publicity for the Spitfires prior to their big FA Cup third round clash with Bolton Wanderers.

He made his debut as a substitute in the 1-1 draw against the Trotters at the Silverlake Stadium, going on for hamstring victim Yemi Odubade.

Mohamed then started – and scored – in the 3-2 replay defeat at the Macron Stadium, but made just three more starts against Boreham Wood, Wrexham and Lincoln, all in the Vanarama National League.

The 31-year-old was named on the bench for subsequent league games against Kidderminster and Gateshead before dropping out of the matchday 16 completely.

When Mohamed signed for Eastleigh from Bath City in early January, he was described by manager Chris Todd as "someone we're crying out for.

Kaid Mohamed in action for Eastleigh against Wrexham.

Scuppered

Robbie Willmott's loan from Ebbsfleet had been scuppered by injury and the Spitfires were badly in need of a right winger.

But with Odubade now fit and versatile record signing Luke Coulson making his mark following his late January switch from Oxford City , Todd is now well covered in that department.

He explained: "Kaid has gone to Tamworth on loan for the rest of the season.

"It's nothing against him, things just didn't work out for him. He's gone to play there and get games."

Cardiff-born Mohamed is something of a journeyman and includes Swindon, Port Vale, Forest Green Rovers, Cheltenham and AFC Wimbledon among his many former clubs.

He joins an in-form Tamworth side sitting just outside the play-off places in the Vanarama National League North.

Real pace

Lambs assistant manager Mike Fowler said: "The gaffer (Andy Morrell) and I tend to like to bring players in when things are going alright as opposed to when we are struggling.

"Kaid is a winger with real pace and scored for Eastleigh against Bolton in the FA Cup. He could really make a difference for us in attack."

Parted company

Fellow wideman Matty Fanimo has also parted company with the Spitfires in recent weeks and, as yet, has not signed on for a new club.

Meanwhile, Spitfires striker Ross Lafayette has had his loan arrangement with National League rivals Aldershot Town extended to the maximum 93 days.

It means he is scheduled to return to Eastleigh for the last week of the season.

Return of Thomson

POPULAR former Gosport Borough midfielder Danny Thompson has been welcomed into the backroom staff.

"Thommo" has re-joined the Borough ranks as a coach to work alongside Alex Pike, Mick Catlin and Tony Stares as part of the Vanarama National League South club's management team.

A member of Gosport's youth, set-up in the mid-1990s, Thompson made his first-team debut as a 16-year-old against Lymington Town in 1997.

He remained part of the fabric of the club during their Wessex League year and played a major part in the title-winning success of 1997.

Since leaving as a player nine years ago, he has spent time at Fareham Town, Hamble ASSC (now Folland Sports) and Petersfield Town, amongst others, and turns out for the Pompey Legends team.

Thompson also plays an active part with the Gosport-based charity, The Oakley Waterman Caravan Foundation, founded by former Pompey and Gosport player Dave Waterman.

● WEYMOUTH boss Jason Matthews believes he has the best striker in the Evo-Stik Southern Premier Division.

Former Frome frontman Ben Thomson followed a brace in the Dorset Senior Cup against Dorchester with another stellar display in last Saturday's 2-0 league win at home to Redditch.

"Ben has really found his feet now and, for me, he is the best striker in the league," said former Eastleigh goalkeeper Matthews. "Coming to Weymouth at this level comes with an expectation and you have to live up to it. Ben's transition [from Frome] has been very quick and he is becoming a little more mentally strong now."

● Former Brighton, Torquay and Salisbury City midfielder Chris McPhee has left the Terras by mutual consent having been out of the squad in recent weeks due to illness.

Danny Thompson

Non league FOOTBALL

Cook opener fit for the Premier League

RUSSELL Cook's opener for Bemerton Heath Harlequins on Tuesday night would not have looked out of place in the Premier League - according to the opposition manager.

Cook lit up Western Way when he put Heath ahead in their 2-0 Sydenhams Premier win over Poppies, expertly controlling an attempted clearance and picking out the top corner.

Sam Griffin doubled the Wiltshire club's lead with virtually the last kick of the game, but it was Cook's stroke of genius that so impressed Poppies boss Ken Vaughan.

"It was a lovely touch and he took it well," he said. "It was a cracking goal. You wouldn't see better in the Premier League. I thoroughly enjoyed the game despite the fact that we didn't come away with the points."

Vaughan was pleased with Poppies debutant Dan Brennan who acquitted himself well at full-back.

"Dan had a first-class game. I was really impressed with him," said the boss. "He fitted in well,."

Russell Cook

Watersiders desperate to improve their numbers ...

'Our squad is too small. We can't carry on like this'

BLACKFIELD & Langley are casting their nets for a couple of new players as they bid to keep the pressure on Wessex leaders Salisbury.

The Gang Warily club have lodged seven days' notice of approach with Bournemouth Poppies for gritty midfielder Connor Doe and have at least one other target in mind.

"The squad's too small," said assistant manager Chris Farrell.

"We can't carry on like last Saturday when we went to Moneyfields with only 13 fit players – and two of those were goalkeepers.

"We've got a busy run of home games coming up this week with Brockenhurst in the league (today), Fleet Town in the Russell Cotes Cup on Tuesday, Team Solent in the league on Thursday and Newport next Saturday."

Blackfield have seen a couple of players depart of late with Matt Game joining Romsey Town and defender Richard Jackson pitching up with Bemerton Heath Harlequins.

And with Ekow Elliott, Rico Wilson, Dan Cann, Josh Buck and Callum Cunliffe-Pilley all missing at Moneyfields, they were down to the bare bones.

But despite their shrinking numbers, the Watersiders defied the odds to come away with a 2-0 victory hailed by Farrell as "our best performance of the season." Sam Lanahan headed them into the lead from a corner and Dan Munday doubled it with his 24th goal of the campaign.

"We knew we had to go there and match Moneyfields physically and we did that while also playing some really good football," said Farrell.

"The two games before that – against Bemerton and Netley Central (in the Southampton Senior Cup semi-final) - we'd played poorly and won. We went into both those games with skeleton squads and got away with it."

Blackfield and Langley's Dan Cann, right.

Dual-signed striker Cann played with an injury against Netley but has finally succumbed to a pulled calf muscle which will keep him out for a couple of weeks.

That will disappointment parent club Winchester City who were hatching plans to recall him for their Southern One South & West play-off run-in.

Farrell, though, doubts Cann would want to go back to the Denplan City Ground even if he wasn't injured.

"I understand Winchester's Zach Glasspool has got a two-match ban coming up (starting today), but Dan won't be fit for either game," he said. "Even if he was fit, he wants to play regularly and he's not going to play second fiddle to Zach, Craig Feeney or even Warren Bentley. "They have first claim on him, but ultimately it's down to Dan."

Gosport sign Oli

VANARAMA National League South play-off hopefuls Gosport Borough have dual-signed young striker Oli Bailey from Southern One Central neighbours Petersfield Town.

Bailey, who hails from the Winchester area and plays cricket for Hursley Park, has caught the eye with 13 goals in 17 games since joining the Rams from Swindon Supermarine.

He has picked up three man-of-the-match awards for the Love Lane outfit and banged in two hat-tricks - in the 4-1 win against Potters Bar and the 7-0 blitz of Chalfont St Peter.

During his time with Supermarine, Southern One South & West rivals Winchester showed an interest in signing him but could not guarantee him regular starts.

Petersfield have retained his services on Southern League forms and hope to continue seeing him back in the red and black shirt.

Bailey's dad Phil said: "Oli is looking forward to Hursley Park cricket next season, but first he must focus on trying to get in amongst the goals at National League South level!"

In Bailey's absence, it was Howard Neighbour who starred for Petersfield last Saturday, scoring twice in a 2-1 win over Bedford Town at Love Lane.

It was their fourth home league win in a row, taking the reigning Sydenhams Premier champions to the 41-point mark which manager Ian Saunders believes "should be enough to keep us in this league."

Braveheart targetman Neighbour produced two brilliant finishes in the 18th and 23rd minutes.

Bailey was back playing – and scoring – for Petersfield on Tuesday, but to no avail.

The Rams' winning home run screeched to a halt as they lost 2-1 to Beaconsfield.

● The Portsmouth Senior Cup quarter-final clash between Gosport Borough and Petersfield Town has been rearranged for this Monday (March 14, 7.45pm) at Borough's Aerial Direct Stadium. The winners will play Havant & Waterlooville.

Oli Bailey

Non league FOOTBALL

Dave Diaper

Diaper denies rumours Sholing cash has run out

DAVE Diaper says there is no truth to the rumours that Sholing will have no money to invest in a Sydenhams Premier title push next year.

The Boatmen's boss insists the former Southern League club remain ambitious – albeit with a large of dose of reality thrown in.

"There have been loads of rumours doing the rounds that we'll have no money for next season, but that's not the case," he clarified.

"But it's true we'll be spending money more wisely in certain areas.

"Do we lack ambition? No. But we have to be realistic and the longevity of any club's ambition has to be measured by the amount of people coming in through the gate.

"If you've got crowds of 700-800 like they have at Salisbury then you can plan for the next level at least.

Difficult

"If you haven't, it becomes more difficult because sponsorship and all the rest of it is not guaranteed."

With just 97 hardy fans clicking through the turnstiles for last Saturday's 3-0 home win over top-six rivals AFC Portchester, Sholing can only dream of having Salisbury-like pulling power.

It's only two years since the Portsmouth Road club were triumphantly lifting the FA Vase at Wembley, but the harsh reality is that Sholing will always face an uphill battle to attract crowds with Saints and Eastleigh on their doorstep.

Diaper, though, has a passion for the club and still gets a kick out of doing what the Boatmen have traditionally excelled at – rolling talented, young players off the Silverlake Arena conveyor belt.

"We're a well-run club and we're just happy to be bringing youth players through and giving them an opportunity," he said.

"There's no need to keep going out and signing 'named' players. I think players should be picked on merit rather than reputation."

Byron picks a good day to join Sholing's elite 400 club

Mason celebrates milestone in big Boatmen victory

BYRON Mason picked a good day to join Sholing's elite '400 club.'

The Boatmen's skipper marked his 400th game for the Portsmouth Road outfit by inspiring the side to a 3-0 home win over promotion-chasing AFC Portchester in the Sydenhams Premier Division - the visitors' first league defeat since August 26.

Sholing's midfield powerhouse, who famously lifted the FA Vase at Wembley in 2014, joined teammate Kev Brewster in reaching the milestone.

Both players were congratulated on the achievement by club president Bill Boyle who honoured them with a special presentation before kick-off.

Mason's younger brother Dan opened the scoring - a strike that looked like being cancelled out when Portchester were awarded a penalty for Pete Castle's push on ex-Winchester City forward Geoff Dunn.

But Joe Bye skewed the spot-kick wide and the Boatmen kicked on to crown victory through teenage striker Nick Yeomans and the other Mason brother, Barry.

"Had their penalty gone in, it could have changed the outcome, but our lads played well and deserved the win," said Boatmen's boss Dave Diaper.

The result dealt a blow to Portchester's promotion ambitions and Royals boss Graham Rix did not like the taste of defeat - only their second in the league all season.

"On paper it looks like a drubbing, but Sholing scored with the only three shots they had on target all game," he said. "I can't fault our effort, but we were not clinical enough at both ends of the pitch."

Sholing climbed to fifth on Tuesday with a 4-0 home success over Cowes Sports.

It was the third win in a row for the in-form Boatmen, incorporating three clean sheets and 12 goals scored.

The Isle of Wight visitors made the brighter start but, once Dan Mason had opened the scoring, Sholing took control.

Jamie Bulpitt made it 2-0 ahead of young Nick Yeomans scoring a ten-yard volley from Barry Mason's cross.

The last word went to top scorer Dan Mason who beat three defenders before netting his 31st goal of a prolific season.

Kev Brewster (left) and Byron Mason are congratulated on 400 Sholing appearances by club president Bill Boyle.

Stability is key - Dave

SHOLING boss Dave Diaper has hailed the players who give the club "stability and consistency".

The manager admits the 2014 FA Vase winners are rebuilding.

"This is a transitional period for us, but kids like Nick Yeomans and Jake Hoole have come in and served us well, while our senior players have put shifts in," Diaper admitted.

"Kev Brewster and Bryon Mason have both reached 400 games and Marvin McLean's not too far off his 500th club appearance.

"Lads like Byron, Kev, Marv, Barry Mason and Lee Webber, who's still signed on as a keeper, have been great for us.

"They give us stability and consistency – key words in any club's success."

Rumour mill

The busy rumour mill is also suggesting that some of Sholing's senior players will next term be heading for neighbouring Hamble Club – currently top of the Hampshire Premier League and aiming for the second title in as many seasons.

"You're bound to get that as the season comes towards an end, but we're going to build a team in pre-season and hopefully challenge for the league next year – and you don't do that without keeping your better players," said the boss.

"We've signed a lot of our young lads on two-year deals because it's important we protect the club's interests as much as the players'.

"We're trying to teach the young lads the right way of doing things and it's a learning curve for them.

"Nick Yeomans doesn't always start but, when he does, he normally turns up with a goal, and Jake Hoole's doing well.

"The main thing the young lads are taught is that it's a team game and it's important they realise they're still on a journey.

"They're on the train but there's another 20 stops to go. They haven't arrived yet!"

Marvin McLean

Non league FOOTBALL

Keeper Benfield 'rapidly becoming a cog in Hamworthy machine'

SHANE Traynor thinks Gerard Benfield is rapidly becoming a key cog in the Hamworthy United machine.

The teenage goalkeeper excelled with two point-blank saves in Tuesday's 2-1 Sydenhams Premier Division victory at Newport IoW.

"Considering he is 18, he is fantastic," said the Hammers boss. "His confidence is going through the roof and it's good to see.

"He is growing in stature and becoming a key player.

"Over the course of the game, he made four or five quality stops. His handling was very good in wet conditions and overall he did very well."

Brad Gale opened the scoring for the Hammers and they triumphed on 88 minutes when Jack Satterley's corner was turned into his own net by Port's young, debut-making keeper Jamie Linington.

Newport had made it 1-1 on 21 minutes when Connor Kelly rounded Benfield to score.

Two of Totton's brightest stars sign new deals – and Hollick hopes for more ...

Wing wizard Gos and keeper Steve stay until 2017

TWO of the brightest stars in the AFC Totton galaxy have signed contract extensions at the Testwood Stadium.

Wing wizard Mike Gosney and former Saints Academy goalkeeper Steve Mowthorpe have put pen to paper on a deal that will keep them at the club until the end of 2016/17.

Now, having got two of his main men signed up, manager Steve Hollick is hopeful that several other squad members will follow suit, ***writes Wendy Gee.***

"These are the first two and hopefully others will follow," he said.

"The indications are that a lot of the lads are very keen to stay and keep the group together."

Mitigating factors

Hollick has every confidence that, with just a couple more additions, Totton will have a squad fit to push for honours in the Evo-Stik Southern One South & West next term.

But he has warned that, if they are to join the main contenders, they will have to learn lessons from last Saturday's 2-1 defeat at Tiverton Town.

It was only the Stags' second loss in their last 11 league outings and there were mitigating factors such as the absence of experienced defensive duo Pat Wilson and Marc Diaper.

Nevertheless Hollick believes that having sped into a 90-second lead through Nick Watts, Totton should have come away from Ladysmead with at least a draw.

Naivety

"I can't knock the effort, but sometimes we let ourselves down with a bit of naivety and rash decision-making," he said.

"The lads have to learn that if we want to do well next year, these are the sort of games we've got to convert into results.

Michael Gosney, above right, and keeper Steve Mowthorpe.

"If you go a goal up somewhere like Tiverton, you've got to come away with at a least a point.

"We put Dylan Knight back up top in place of Mark Gamble and he caused all sorts of problems.

"We rode our luck a bit at times first-half, but the lads really grafted to go in 1-0 up at half-time on a very heavy pitch.

"Unfortunately Tiverton broke us down in the second half with two relatively soft goals."

Owen Howe shrugged off a tight hamstring to plunder both Tivvy goals. Going into today's round of games the Devon outfit were sitting ninth in the table, ten points outside the play-off zone.

Tiverton boss Martyn Rogers said of the Totton defeat: "I told the boys before the game that it was D-Day. Unless we got a win we could probably have said goodbye to the play-offs."

Town held to draw

WIMBORNE boss Simon Browne is hoping Mark Ford's double against Marlow last weekend will provide the springboard for more goals to come.

The former Blackfield & Langley and Salisbury striker opened and completed the scoring as the Magpies claimed a share of the spoils in an eventful 3-3 Southern One South & West draw in Buckinghamshire.

Ford, signed from Weymouth in January, had previously netted just twice since opening his account on his debut in a 5-2 defeat by AFC Totton.

Browne said: "Mark had a spell at Weymouth and scored goals for them. He is one of those lads who knows where the goal is and scores at whatever level he plays at.

"With the number of players who left when I took over, we needed someone to get us a few goals.

"He has been through a bit of a barren spell. In recent games against Cinderford, Bridgwater and Bishops Cleeve, he had lots of chances but it didn't happen for him, apart from a penalty against Cleeve.

"I was pleased he got on the scoresheet at Marlow with a goal from open play and a penalty. Hopefully, it will be the start of him banging in a few because that's what we got him in for."

Wimborne headed to Marlow bidding to end a five-match winless run and Browne admitted they had been a touch fortunate to escape with a draw.

"We rode our luck a little in the second half and Marlow were probably the better side after the break," he confessed. "But the goals we conceded were unfortunate.

"One was a shot which took a heavy deflection and gave Pat O'Flaherty no chance.

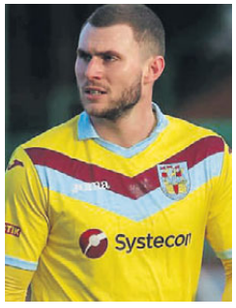
"Their third goal was a penalty for a very harsh hand ball against Scott Arnold, who was no more than a yard away. He didn't raise his arm either.

"But we got a deserved equaliser so I was happy with a point."

Wimborne's scheduled trip to North Leigh on Wednesday was rained off.

Mark Ford, left

Non league FOOTBALL



Ben Thomson

Plaudits after a stellar goal display by striker Ben

WEYMOUTH boss Jason Matthews believes he has the best striker in the Evo-Stik Southern Premier Division.

Former Frome Town frontman Ben Thomson followed a brace in the Dorset Senior Cup against Dorchester with another stellar display in last Saturday's 2-0 league win at home to Redditch United.

"I feel that Ben has really found his feet now and, for me, he is the best striker in the league," said former Eastleigh goalkeeper Matthews.

"Coming to Weymouth at this level comes with an expectation and you have to live up to it.

"Ben's transition [from Frome] has been very quick and he is becoming a little more mentally strong now," Matthews added.

Problem

"He had a problem with his hamstring when he first came to us and it's something we have tried to address and help him with.

"He still has little niggles, but he is a big powerful striker and he's going to get those. I need to manage him well."

● Meanwhile, ex-Brighton, Torquay and Salisbury City midfielder Chris McPhee has left the Terras by mutual consent having been out of the squad in recent weeks due to illness.

"Things haven't really worked out for him this season," said Weymouth chairman Chris Pugsley.

Ken: That was one of the worst defeats I've known

Poppies boss furious after loss to lowly Folland

LONG-SERVING Poppies boss Ken Vaughan did not hold back on his criticism of last week's 2-0 home defeat by rock-bottom Folland Sports.

After edging the first half against their lowly visitors, Poppies imploded after the break as goals from Spaniard Javi Santafe-Vivo and Cain Prentice secured Follands' fourth Sydenhams Premier win of the campaign.

"We were shocking all over the park," was Vaughan's damning verdict. "It was probably one of the worst performances I've been involved in."

For Follands' manager Dave Herbert, it was a job well done by his side in the second half – particularly in light of the playing surface and the fact that they still had tired limbs from playing Andover Town less than 48 hours earlier.

"It was a battle. The pitch is the worst I've seen, more suitable to having cows grazing on it," he said.

"They edged the first half, but I tweaked the side at half-time, moving Santi (Santafe-Vivo) out to the left, Cain Prentice up top with Luke Musselwhite and Alex Sheath in the middle with Will Harris."

The tactics paid dividends with former Winchester City midfielder Santafe-Vivo making the 78th-minute breakthrough before Prentice struck on the break in stoppage time.

"We were gutted about losing 2-1 to Andover on the Thursday – never in a million years did Andover deserve to win – but this time we got the rub of the green," said Herbert.

Santafe-Vivo, 24, spent ten years in the Valencia youth ranks and has featured for CD Javea, who play in Spain's fourth division. He is a physical education teacher in his homeland and has come to the south coast to improve his English.

Although his touch and ability on the ball was evident in training, Winchester boss Paul Masters had his doubts that his sunshine signing would thrive in the rough and tumble of the Southern League – particularly in the gloom of an English winter.

Herbert understands that concern but is trying to get the Spaniard to play to the team's strengths.

"Santi's enjoying it here and the lads love him," he said. "He's doing well and it's just getting him used to the style of play. For the first couple games he was a bit shell-shocked. When we played Fawley, they kept robbing us in the middle of the park and now he understands why we play the way we do.

"We started him in central midfield at Bournemouth, but then moved him out to the left in the second half. It wasn't a day for playing football!"

Follands' progress was checked on Tuesday as they were beaten 4-0 at third-placed AFC Portchester - Louie Castles, Miles Everett, Jason Parish and sub Tom Froggatt scoring.

Poppies also tasted midweek defeat at Bemerton - Russell Cook and Sam Griffin firing the hosts to a 2-0 win.

Javi Santafe-Vivo in action for Winchester City.

Cargill's injury woe

BAILY Cargill returned to AFC Bournemouth for treatment this week after sustaining an ankle injury while on loan at Coventry City.

The 20-year-old former AFC Totton loanee joined the Sky Blues at the beginning of February and had been due to remain with the League One club until the end of the season.

But the centre-back was forced off at half-time during Coventry's 1-0 home defeat to Rochdale last Saturday and was rumoured to have left the ground wearing a protective boot.

City boss Tony Mowbray said: "Baily has gone back to Bournemouth to get scanned and let them assess the damage and then decide what's right for the boy.

"His ankle was pretty swollen."

Cargill has made five appearances for Coventry since his loan move and scored his first domestic professional goal on his home debut in the 6-0 hammering of Bury last month.

The youngster's only other appearances this season have come in cup competitions for Cherries, two in the League Cup and two in the FA Cup.

In all, Cargill has made ten senior appearances for the Dorset club - seven in the League Cup and three in the FA Cup.

The spell at Coventry was his fourth loan spell.

After his first at AFC Totton in 2012/13, Cargill signed his first pro contract at Dean Court.

He spent time on loan at Welling in 2013/14 before a short stint with Torquay in League 2 towards the end of 2014/15.

Saints youngster Jack Stephens is also on loan at Coventry.

The England youth international has made six starts for the Sky Blues, but his time at the club has taken in shock home defeats to Fleetwood and Rochdale. City were also beaten 2-1 at Shrewsbury in midweek.

Baily Cargill

Emma takes her goal tally to 10 in four games

WARSASH Wasps regained top spot in Division 1 of the Hampshire Women's League with a 4-2 win at home to Mudeford.

They led 3-1 at the break and finished comfortable victors largely thanks to Emma Jane-May's brace, which took her tally to ten goals from just four games.

First points

AFC Stoneham claimed their first points of the season with a 4-3 win at Widbrook, Claire Luffman scoring twice.

Rachel Cardy bagged a hat trick as BTC beat Rushmoor 5-1.

Winchester flyers Reserves suffered a surprise League Cup defeat to AFC Boscombe. Kate Norman (3),Vic Wardle (2) and Nicole Power scored in a 6-4 win.

Southampton Women's Reserves and QK Southampton continued their season-long struggle in Division.

Both sides lost on the road to Kingsclere and Horndean respectively. Its not a done deal, though, as third-from- bottom Bursledon also lost, 6-2 to Gosport Borough.

The top two in the third tier, AFC Portchester and Portsmouth, progressed in the cup against Bournemouth Reserves and AFC Petersfield.

Southampton Saints were hoping to complete the double over West Ham in the FA Premier League Reserves, but were caned 6-1.

The Southern Region League saw division one Team Solent crash 5-0 at home to Southampton Women, who leapt above their hosts into third spot.

Chesham United remain top and in the automatic promotion spot to the regional premier league, but will now be looking anxiously over their shoulder.

Romped

Merley went top of the Winchester Girls U16 league.

They romped to a 16-1 success at Winchester Flyers at Sutton Scotney, thanks to magnificent seven goals by Annie Graham and four goals from Gemma Mountain.

Reeves: We're planning for long-term future at Tatnam

Poole Town chairman Chris Reeves

POOLE Town are planning for a long-term future at Tatnam – but proposals over Poole Stadium could change matters in a heartbeat.

Addressing a fans' forum, vice-chairman Reeves expressed four key concerns over moving – security of tenure, ensuring facilities are fit for purpose, manageable overheads and confidence over revenue streams, writes Andy Mitchell.

The long-serving Dolphins director said it was his understanding that developers wanted to move "very quickly" on a complete rebuild of the Poole Stadium site, which currently hosts the town's speedway club and greyhound racing.

But in explaining why staying put remains the number one choice, Reeves insists returning to a revamped version of Poole's former home has yet to be flushed out of the pipeline.

Reeves said: "There are three reasons, the first being that we built Tatnam and have had so much success here. The supporters love it because it came after years in the wilderness and playing at godforsaken places. There is a huge amount of affection for our home.

"Secondly, it is reality for us. We are here and maybe we feel we have a bit more control over this place than we would anywhere else.

"Thirdly, perhaps the stadium feels a bit too good to contemplate.

"That said, if we could be sure of going to a brand new Poole Stadium with all the facilities we could wish for, good quality revenue streams and not being crippled by overheads then that would be the preferred option because in theory, there would be no limit to our ambition."

In the short term, the Dolphins board estimates Tatnam needs a £70,000 spruce-up to meet National League requirements – the Football Association's B grade – by March 31, 2017, should Southern League leaders Poole win promotion this season.

Bringing together the two existing seated stands, installing three extra turnstiles and added hospitality facilities are the most sizeable tasks with the potential for more cost should the club fall short of the minimum capacity requirement of 3,000.

Poole may also have to hand back approximately £150,000 in grants already spent on Tatnam should they then choose to move on, although Reeves hopes any bill could be wiped out by the site being used for community football projects.

But with continued investment required and a ten-year lease in place, tentative plans are coming together to create a home on the site of Oakdale South Road Middle School that is of benefit to both parties.

"Should it go ahead, there would be a slightly bigger stand with facilities underneath it that could be used by the school during the week," added Reeves.

"It would be dual use. The school would get extra classrooms and we would have the facilities to operate at the level we're at and hope to be in the future. We've probably spent the best part of £500,000 since we've been here and £300,000 of that has been in the past three years.

"That alone suggests we are not going to be kicked out after ten years, but if we are going to spend a hell of a lot more money, a longer stay is something we will expect."

On the capacity issue, Reeves said: "It has to be a concern. We have to satisfy the ground grading requirements but that extra capacity could easily be accommodated by terracing without any particular encroachment on the site than is in place."

Saints do the double over Uni

SOUTHAMPTON Saints U14 did the double over Portsmouth University U15s in the U15 Winchester division.

A fixture pile-up resulted in back-to-back matches at the Portsmouth University Campus grounds in shortened halves of 20 minutes.

The away fixture was up first, and with Saints boasting a fully fit squad they were looking to consolidate their position at the top of the table.

Saints went ahead midway through the first half courtesy of Kia Anteney's calm finish following Imogen Twigt's fine through ball.

Late in the first half, Anteney prodded home from close range following a melee in the box after Sian Bradbeer's corner.

The second half saw a Pompey reply.

Saints also won the second game, goals from Isabella Cornes and Jennifer King giving them a 2-0 victory.

All quiet for U13s

WINCHESTER U13 had a full programme last week end and signed up to the County FA's request for a 'Silent Weekend.'

Portsmouth University had an 8-0 win against Alton. A bad day on the road saw Warsash Wasps Yellows and sister side Warsash Wasps Blacks go down to St Francis Rangers and Widbrook Reds, losing 6-1 and 4-0 respectively.

Worthies had a comfortable 5-0 win at Widbrook Blacks.

Cup final rehearsal

SOUTHAMPTON Saints under-12s defeated Winchester City Flyers 4-2 in a dress rehearsal for the League Cup Final on May 14.

Tilly Thomas opened the scoring, Katie Pakes soon converted Chloe Andrews' cross, and Thomas scored her second via a deflection

Winchester reduced the arrears before half-time, and added a second after the break.

But Saints kept creating chances and Thomas completed her hat-trick from close range to put Saints 4-2 up from Libby Mell's free-kick.

Leah Ballard threatened a fifth but hit the post

The Winchester Flyers Reds U11's continued their fine run by beating Southampton Saints, but sister side Winchester Blacks lost to Widbrook.

BIG SAVINGS

Elite
1500
2 Drawer Set

This high quality divan features a deep quilted, high loft, 1500 pocket sprung mattress with 2 drawers and an option of 4 base colours

4'6" normal price **£589.99 OFFER PRICE £489.99***
5' normal price **£659.99 OFFER PRICE £559.99***

* Excludes headboard

£250
Part Exchange

on ANY item of furniture when you buy a NEW 3 Piece Suite**

We will exchange any piece of your old furniture (chair, settee, suite) for a NEW 3 piece suite.

** Minimum order value £1800. Offer applies to orders placed by 30th April 2016. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.

Pont Furnishings is a family run business

FREE LOCAL DELIVERY

Credit available subject to status - full details on request

33-35 Victoria Road, Woolston, Southampton SO19 9DY
sales@pontfurnishings.co.uk

T: 023 8044 0303
Open 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday

FREE PARKING IN WOOLSTON

www.pontfurnishings.co.uk

PONT FURNISHINGS

Suites • Recliners • Beds & Bedding • Reupholstery • Carpets • Lighting • Colonial & Village Candles

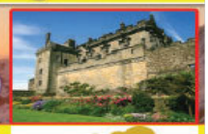
UK & Continental Coach Holidays

LATE AVAILABILITY GETAWAYS

From Only £179

The Isle of Wight
Inc visit to Osborne House
5 Days, 4th April
Now Only £335

Heart of Scotland/Stirling
6 days, 10th April - Only £519



NEW SPECIAL - JUST ANNOUNCED
CADBURY WORLD DAY TRIP
Weds 30th March (Easter half-term)
Includes return travel and admission
Children from £25 - Adults £37.50

Cadbury WORLD

Scarborough & Heartbeat Country
6 Days, 11th April - £329

Paignton
5 Days, 25th April - Only £179

CALL US OR GO ONLINE FOR YOUR FREE BROCHURE!

ANGELA Holidays **023 8040 4536**
www.angelaholidays.co.uk

BREAKTHROUGH CARPET FITTING SERVICE IS.....

THE STRESS-LESS WAY TO REPLACE YOUR CARPETS.

YOU CAN **NOW** HAVE NEW FITTED CARPETS IN YOUR HOME, BUT WITHOUT THE NIGHTMARE OF CLEARING YOUR ROOM IN PREPARATION, INCLUDING FIVE **FREE** ESSENTIAL EXTRAS.

After years of accepting traditional carpet fitting methods, customers just like you, are now choosing the smart way to have new carpets. Never again will you need to empty your room of furniture, and take up your old carpet ready for the fitters just to walk in and roll out your new carpet. Let's be frank here, if you're paying for a job to be done, you shouldn't be expected to do more than half the work yourself. It would be like eating at a nice restaurant, paying for your meal and then washing up.

Five free extra bonuses for you

Feature Flooring and Carpets not only removes and repositions your furniture, but will also uplift and take away your old floor coverings, secure any loose or squeaky floorboards, expertly fit your carpet and will also trim doors to fit over your new carpets, and then vacuum, bag up, and remove all rubbish and off cuts. Leaving you with nothing to do but put back your ornaments and photographs and then enjoy your carpet for years to come.

A note from a customer

We would like to acknowledge the exemplary service you provided us.

We are extremely happy with the work you have done throughout our house.

We delighted with the finished product but guidance, support and advice you provided throughout was invaluable to us.

It really made what was a fairly daunting task at the start, a trouble-free and straightforward process. Mr and Mrs G. Lyndhurst

Just one thing for you to do now

Call Freephone, e mail or a good old fashioned letter is all that it takes, to arrange a free home visit for you to choose from over 997 carpets and vinyls, from 11 top manufacturers, always in stock whichever carpet you need for your home they have a range of quality and prices including the least and the most expensive and finally rid yourself of your old carpets that you've been thinking of changing for years **and** do it the stress-less way, **and** for the same price as fitting in an empty room. With a unique 100% guarantee of satisfaction. Call feature flooring and carpets now.

FEATURE FLOORING AND CARPETS

FREEPHONE **0800 915 8295** • SOUTHAMPTON **02380 736004** • 12 Upton Crescent, Nursling, Southampton SO16 8AB
e.mail info@featureflooringandcarpets.co.uk • www.lovemycarpet.co.uk

Currently rated 9.8 out of 10, with over 420 feedbacks

Proud members of Checkatrade.com Where reputation matters

Cheltenham 2016

EIGHT-PAGE PREVIEW GUIDE TO RACING'S GREATEST FESTIVAL

PLAY YOUR CARD RIGHT

Betfair Chase ✓

King George VI ✓

Cheltenham Gold Cup ?

Cue Card out to seal £1m bonus in the BIG one

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
StanJames.com
For the bettors

INSIDE ■ GOLD CUP PINSTICKERS' GUIDE ■ BETTING POINTERS ■ FESTIVAL INTERVIEWS

Festival bonanza

Colin's in a Tiz over his hotshot

AS Cue Card stands just one race away from a £1million windfall, it could be easy to believe trainer Colin Tizzard has no nerves about the magnitude of the task in question given the air of calmness his persona possesses.

Should the talented 10-year-old triumph in the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup, and add to wins in the Betfair Chase and the King George VI Chase, it would see him pocket the seven-figure sum put up by the Jockey Club Racecourses to any horse that can win all three contests.

It would also deliver the Milborne Port handler the race he aspires to win more than any other.

Although Tizzard may appear relaxed on the outside, there is a pressure building within as he attempts for a task that was last completed by the mighty Kauto Star back in the 2006-07 season.

He said: "I do feel pressure. It makes me nervous just talking about it.

"For me it is the best race, the Grand National is probably the biggest, but for me the Gold Cup is the best race.

"If I could win the Gold Cup it would be the pinnacle of my training career and be with us forever. The money is fantastic and it's a lovely idea to do it. It's fantastic for the stable staff and everybody else.

"We have a better chance of winning the Gold Cup than we did of winning the King George, because he likes Cheltenham.

"He can come down the hill and have a breather. He has shown he is a stone better around Cheltenham than he is at Kempton.

"He doesn't owe us anything, but he has a very good chance of getting in the first three."

> *If Cue Card had been trained by Paul Nicholls or Willie Mullins he probably would have been favourite*
> ***– Trainer Colin Tizzard***

While there are those that still doubt whether the dual Cheltenham Festival winner can effectively see out the three-and-a-quarter-mile trip, Tizzard feels his performance in the King George offers more than enough evidence to silence his critics. He said: "He has changed over the last two years and stepping him up has been the making of him. He used to be flamboyant and tear off, but now he is a different horse and that's why he gets the trip.

"I think it took all of three miles for him to get past Vautour (at Kempton). If you didn't know his history you would say he is a stayer. Once he got there he stayed on brilliantly.

"For me he looked like a real stayer that day. He didn't even jump that well at Kempton. He popped a few and he was saving all the time. He would almost run away on our gallops, now he is a lovely ride. With that in mind, if you watch the King George you can see he stayed well.

"If Cue Card had been trained by Paul Nicholls or Willie Mullins he probably would have been favourite. That sums it up really."

Having been forced to miss the past two Festivals with the six-time Grade One winner through injury, Tizzard is now praying that fate does not strike a cruel blow and intervene.

He said: "He has been brilliant this year. It's been a big thing getting him back. Everyone who watches racing thought we had seen the best of this horse, but to have him back is great.

"You've got to keep it in perspective, it was only a slight injury in a horse, it's not like losing someone close to you, but it felt like it.

"It does frighten you, we don't want anything out of our control to stop where we want to be. As long as I can make myself and everyone do what we have been doing all season we should be fine."

Although much has been made of the breathing operation on his trapped epiglottis helping rejuvenate the 13-time winner, there has been another integral factor that has bolstered his position among the leading staying chasers – that of his blossoming relationship with jockey Paddy Brennan.

Tizzard said: "Paddy puts a lot of thought into it. It is so important to him, the owners and me that we get it right.

"You look at him now, he is riding for everybody again. He is not going to be fazed by any Gold Cup."

Paddy Brennan and Cue Card have struck up a great partnership

Big-race wins

Champion Bumper (Grade One)	2010
Sharp Novices' Hurdle (Grade Two)	2010
Haldon Gold Cup (Grade Two)	2012
Ascot Chase (Grade One)	2013
Ryanair Chase (Grade One)	2013
Betfair Chase (Grade One)	2013
Charlie Hall Chase (Grade Two)	2015
Betfair Chase (Grade One)	2015
King George VI Chase (Grade One)	2015

FESTIVAL FANCIES

Three things we love about the Cheltenham showpiece

CENTAUR BAR
The unrivalled meeting place after racing

THE START
The battle cry when the tape snaps free for the first race

SCENERY
The sweeping vistas of Cleeve Hill. Magic.

ONE jockey fortunate to be on board a supposed 'good thing' at this year's Festival is Barry Geraghty, the man charged with steering Yanworth in the Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle.

Since finishing fourth in the Bumper 12 months ago, the six-year-old has gone from strength to strength.

After winning on his debut at Exeter, the Alan King-trained gelding has since won at Warwick and bagged a brace of Grade Two successes at Ascot and Cheltenham.

His commanding display at Prestbury Park in January not only saw him leap to the head of the market of the two-mile-five-furlong contest, but left a big impression on Geraghty.

He said: "He travelled brilliantly and jumped nicely. It would be great to think he could improve again.

"It's hard to say how good he is. He has potential."

IN recent years the Ryanair World Hurdle has proved to be a good race for returning champions and, given that statistic, it is easy to see why trainer Warren Greatrex is optimistic about the prospects of Cole Harden.

The betting suggests Cole Harden has it all to do to retain his crown and overturn Thistlecrack, following impressive wins in the Long Distance Hurdle, Long Walk Hurdle and the Cleeve Hurdle. But the Upper Lambourn handler believes his stable star will prove a tough nut to crack.

Harden said: "He is better as there is more fuel in the tank. He is bigger and stronger and his work is good and, if anything, he is starting to relax.

"Thistlecrack has never met Cole Harden on good ground and, if he does, he is going to need to be a champion because this horse doesn't know when to give up."

VICTORIA Pendleton would rank completing the course at the Festival alongside her golden glory days in the Olympics.

Pendleton, 35, said it was "hugely exciting" to have been given clearance to ride Pacha Du Polder in the St James's Place Foxhunter Chase.

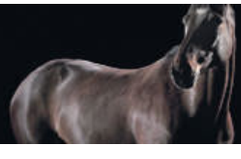
Yet despite her monumental cycling achievements, the dual Olympic champion would be just as proud to pass the finishing line in what is widely recognised as the Gold Cup for amateur jockeys.

Pendleton said: "This has been no walk in the park, it has been physically demanding.

"This is hugely exciting. There'll be a phenomenal crowd at Cheltenham.

"Getting round would be incredible.

"If I get round on the horse and complete the course I'll feel like that's a gold medal."

This is not just a horse...
...if you put a bet on it!

NEW CUSTOMER OFFER
BET £10 GET £20 FREE BET
StanJames.com
For the bettors
Bet £10 Get £20 offer for new accounts only, opened via web or mobile. First bet must be a minimum of £10 at 4/5 or greater to qualify. General terms and conditions apply. See www.stanjames.com for more info.Gamble responsibly. www.gamblearware.co.uk 18

Festival preview

Gold Cup pinstickers' guide: pages 4-5

There's no-one quite as cool as Ruby

Ruby Walsh is after a 10th jockey crown at the Festival. **Frank Malley** looks at what makes him such a force at Prestbury Park...

Ruby Walsh celebrates after winning the Arkle on Un De Sceaux last year. This time around, his brilliant eight-year-mount could well add the Champion Chase to his burgeoning CV

WHEN the mud is flying and the hooves are thundering and the battle between horse and jockey is at its most intense coming up Cleeve Hill at the Cheltenham Festival, there is one man above all others who can be guaranteed to keep his composure.

Ruby Walsh is the Mr Cool of racing. The master of the late, smooth surge. A jockey with an uncanny knack of manoeuvring his mounts into the perfect position to jump the obstacles before them with the minimum of fuss and the maximum of style.

In the brutal and dangerous world of jumps racing that ability to simplify proceedings goes to the core of why Walsh, especially at Cheltenham, appears cloaked in stardust.

The statistics are mind-blowing. Since steering Alexander Banquet to victory in the 1998 Bumper, Walsh has amassed 45 winners at the Festival, 12 more than his nearest rival Barry Geraghty and 14 more than Tony McCoy, the greatest jump jockey of all time.

Walsh has been leading jockey at Cheltenham nine times in the last 12 years, including the last three in a row.

This year he has a chance of passing 50 winners at the Festival, a phenomenal milestone at the age of 36. That would require another five winners but, hey, this is the man who delivered an astonishing seven horses to the winner's enclosure in 2009.

That was the year he guided Kauto Star to his second Gold Cup and who would bet against Walsh making it a hat-trick of successes in Cheltenham's most prestigious race on Djakadam, last year's runner-up who stays well, but might have his work cut out against the Dons in the shape of Don Cossack and Don Poli, the latter a two-time winner at Cheltenham, including last year's RSA Chase?

A leg injury to Faugheen and the withdrawal of stablemate Arctic Fire has not helped the cause in the Champion Hurdle, although Annie Power, if added, could still deliver despite tough opposition from Nichols Canyon.

Part of Walsh's success is grounded in the God-given talents which are present in most sublime sportsmen. Sharper speed of thought, an ability to relax fully and concentrate completely at the same time.

Part of it is down to the horses and trainers he has been privileged to work with, Willie Mullins and Paul Nicholls providing the bulk of his Cheltenham winners. Part of it is down to his dad, Ted Walsh, who has been Ruby's greatest supporter, his closest adviser and biggest critic since he began riding as a pro at the age of 19 after winning the Irish amateur jockey title twice.

"Dad is very easy to talk to. If you are right he'll tell you, if you're wrong he'll tell you even more," Ruby explains. "I always had a coach, my father."

Few sporting family unions have delivered so spectacularly as the Walshes, who won the Grand National at Aintree with Ted the trainer and jockey Ruby on board Papillon at the age of 20.

Ruby says that was "the greatest day in my career", but there have been moments at the Festival which have run even that phenomenal feat close. Such as Big Buck's World Hurdle triumph in 2009 when Walsh's mount lay in eighth approaching the penultimate hurdle and stumbled over the last, but still had the fight to outlast the opposition.

Such as Hurricane Fly, who was settled down with ease by Ruby in the 2011 Champion Hurdle to edge out Peddlar's Cross. But when Walsh and Cheltenham are mentioned thoughts inevitably turn to Kauto Star, a horse perfectly suited to Walsh's phlegmatic nature and composed style.

When Kauto destroyed his great adversary Denman to win the 2009 Gold Cup by 13 lengths to regain the trophy they had won together in 2007, Cheltenham was deluged in emotion as the man from County Kildare gave the Irish an excuse for another monumental celebration.

Walsh has endured his fair share of injuries, including a compound fracture of his humerus in a fall in the Triumph Hurdle in 2014.

"The worst part is lying in the ambulance thinking how long is this going to be," said Walsh. "The mental torture is the worst thing, but you learn to deal with it."

Not that Walsh is anything other than relentlessly positive. Which is why, with Un De Sceaux fancied for the Queen Mother Champion Chase, Cheltenham 2016 could be resounding to a familiar Irish refrain if Mullins and Ruby once more go to town.

LEADING JOCKEYS

Top current riders at the Cheltenham Festival

45 Ruby Walsh
33 Barry Geraghty
20 Richard Johnson
15 Davy Russell
14 Paul Carberry
8 Timmy Murphy
7 Tom scudamore
6 Paddy Brennan
5 Nina Carberry

> *Dad is easy to talk to. If you are right he'll tell you, if you're wrong he'll tell you even more* **– Ruby Walsh**

Tuesday 15 March

Time	Race	Distance
1.30	Sky Bet Supreme Novices' Hurdle	2m87y
2.10	Racing Post Arkle Challenge Trophy	1m7f199y
2.50	Ultima Handicap Chase	3m1f
3.30	**Stan James Champion Hurdle**	**2m87y**
4.10	OLBG Mares' Hurdle	2m3f200y
4.50	National Hunt Chase (Amateur Riders)	3m7f170y
5.30	Close Brothers Novices' Handicap Chase	2m4f78y

Wednesday 16 March

1.30	Neptune Investment Management Novices' Hurdle	2m5f26y
2.10	RSA Chase	3m80y
2.50	Coral Cup (Handicap Hurdle)	2m5f26y
3.30	**Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase**	**1m7f199y**
4.10	Glenfarclas Cross Country Chase	3m6f37y
4.50	Fred Winter Juvenile Handicap Hurdle	2m87y
5.30	Weatherbys Champion Bumper	2m87y

Thursday 17 March

1.30	JLT Novices' Chase (The Golden Miller Novices' Chase)	2m3f198y
2.10	Pertemps Network Final (Handicap Hurdle)	2m7f213y
2.50	Ryanair Chase	2m4f166y
3.30	**Ryanair World Hurdle**	**2m7f213y**
4.10	Brown Advisory & Merriebelle Stable Plate	2m4f166y
4.50	Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Challenge Cup (Amateur Riders)	3m2f
5.30	Trull House Stud Mares Novices' Hurdle	2m179y

Friday 18 March

1.30	JCB Triumph Hurdle	2m179y
2.10	Vincent O'Brien County Handicap Hurdle	2m179y
2.50	Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle	2m7f213y
3.30	**Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup**	**3m2f70y**
4.10	St James's Place Foxhunter Chase	3m2f70y
4.50	Martin Pipe Conditional Jockeys' Handicap Hurdle	2m4f56y
5.30	Johnny Henderson Grand Annual Chase	2m62y

TOP PRICE EVERY RUNNER
STAN JAMES CHAMPION HURDLE
QUEEN MOTHER CHAMPION CHASE
WORLD HURDLE
CHELTENHAM GOLD CUP
StanJames.com For the bettors
Top Price from 10am on the selected race day. General terms and conditions apply. See www.stanjames.com for more info. Gamble responsibly. www.gambleaware.co.uk 18

Gold Cup pin

Chris Wilson runs the rule over the possible runners in the Timico Cheltenham Gold Cup

Ballycasey 1

Form: PB-493
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 9
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Beat Don Cossack at Grade One level as a novice at Leopardstown in 2014, but has managed just one win since and has struggled in handicap company. His last two runs at Gowran Park have been very average and they were with Ruby Walsh on board, so you can virtually strike him off straight away. **2**

Stan James odds: 150-1

Boston Bob 2

Form: 0-50P1
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 11
Gold Cup 2015: 0

A classy chaser a couple of seasons ago and also finished second in the Albert Bartlett in 2012, but he has been on the slide. And while his recent Bobbyjo Chase success at Fairyhouse is a plus, he will find a few too sharp here, just as he did last year when finishing 10th. **3**

Stan James odds: 100-1

Carlingford Lough 3

Form: 19-461
Trainer: John Kiely
Age: 10
Gold Cup 2015: 9

Stayed on gamely to win the Irish Gold Cup for a second time last month at Leopardstown, but that was hardly a vintage renewal of the race, although he did beat Road To Riches and Sir Des Champs pretty convincingly that day. He was, though, thoroughly found out when only ninth here last year. **5**

Stan James odds: 33-1

Champagne West 4

Form: 2F-2PF
Trainer: Philip Hobbs
Age: 8
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Second in the ultra-competitive Caspian Caviar Gold Cup here in December, but this is a totally different prospect and he looks out of his depth. Has subsequently pulled up at Prestbury Park and fell when well beaten in the BetBright Chase at Kempton to temper any sort of optimism. **1**

Stan James odds: 100-1

Cue Card 5

Form: 2-4111
Trainer: Colin Tizzard
Age: 10
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Shooting for a £1million bonus after winning the Betfair Chase and King George, the 10-year-old will never have a better chance and arrives here with at least 8lb in hand on the ratings. He represents superb value and though unproven beyond three miles, he relaxes much better in his races now and will take all the beating. **10**

Stan James odds: 9-2

Djakadam 6

Form: 12-21F
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 7
Gold Cup 2015: 2

Long-time leading player in the ante-post markets, he chased home Coneygree last year and must be one for the shortlist. However, he has not had the ideal preparation after falling at Cheltenham in the Cotswold Chase in January and might have to settle for place honours again. **8**

Stan James odds: 5-1

Many Clouds 12

Form: 61-622
Trainer: Oliver Sherwood
Age: 9
Gold Cup 2015: 6

He will be staying on all the way up the Cheltenham hill, but likely lacks the pace to figure and a repeat Grand National success remains his primary objective. Has, though, been in fine fettle this season at both Aintree and Cheltenham, but definitely more suited to the marathon contest at Liverpool. **6**

Stan James odds: 33-1

Morning Assembly 13

Form: 3/3-22
Trainer: Pat Fahy
Age: 9
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Injury saw him sidelined for the best part of two years and although he has shaped well enough in two starts this term, at Fairyhouse and Gowran Park, he still appears some way short of the novice form that saw him once beat Don Cossack at Punchestown. **4**

Stan James odds: 100-1

O'Faolains Boy 14

Form: 5/P1P8
Trainer: Rebecca Curtis
Age: 9
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Won the RSA Chase two years ago, but injury has limited his opportunities since, with just one graduation chase win at Newbury back in December in five subsequent outings. Last time out finished well down the field in a handicap hurdle at Chepstow and there are better outsiders to have a bet on. **5**

Stan James odds: 66-1

On His Own 15

Form: 97U482
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 12
Gold Cup 2015: 5

Lost out by just a short head in 2014 and finished fifth last year so obviously goes well at Cheltenham. Unseated in the cross-country event in December and was narrowly beaten by Boston Bob in the Bobbyjo. But he is in the veteran stage now and while he will be in there punching, he now looks short of this level. **3**

Stan James odds: 100-1

Road To Riches 16

Form: 13-312
Trainer: Noel Meade
Age: 9
Gold Cup 2015: 3

Third in the race last year and winner of one of his three subsequent starts, he deserves a bit more credit than his 12-length defeat behind Carlingford Lough last time suggests as nothing was in his favour that day. He should make strides from what was his first start for a good few months. **7**

Stan James odds: 16-1

Sir Des Champs 17

Form: F4/157
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 10
Gold Cup 2015: 5

Injury arguably robbed him of what should have been his golden years and it is hard to see him returning to his very best after a couple of so-so runs lately at Leopardstown. Won on his comeback outing at Thurles in November after almost two years away, but will need something special to figure here. **5**

Stan James odds: 66-1

Cooper may have a Festival frenzy

BRYAN COOPER fully appreciates the privileged position in which he finds himself heading to the Cheltenham Festival.

Three years on from hitting the headlines with a Prestbury Park hat-trick as a teenage riding sensation, the softly-spoken Irishman is now firmly established among the sport's elite jockeys, despite being at the tender age of 23.

As retained rider for the Gigginstown House Stud operation, Cooper will be the envy of most of his weighing room colleagues as he makes the journey from Ireland for a book of rides most jockeys could only dream of.

"I'm in a very lucky position. Hopefully they get there in one piece," he said.

Being in such an excellent job is not without its challenges, however, and one decision which has Cooper in a quandary is what to ride in the Gold Cup.

His employers could have as many as four runners in the blue riband, but it would look a straight choice between 'The two Dons', Don Cossack and Don Poli. Gordon Elliott's pride and joy Don Cossack is the ante-post favourite and is widely regarded as the 'sexier' option, but he is winless in two previous visits to the Cotswolds.

The Willie Mullins-trained Don Poli, on the other hand, is two from two at the track and looked a tailor-made Gold Cup contender when galloping remorselessly clear in the RSA Chase 12 months ago, but does he possess the requisite speed and class for steeplechasing's greatest prize? These are the questions Cooper will need to answer and he plans to leave the decision as late as possible to give him the best chance of getting the right call.

He said: "It's not easy as if you get it wrong you'll be kicking yourself for six months afterwards, but you can only ride one horse.

"I won't decide until 10.30am on the Wednesday morning."

Ruby Walsh faced a similar dilemma in 2008 when forced to choose between stable companions Kauto Star and Denman and ultimately called it wrong as Denman stole the show under Sam Thomas. Walsh must also decide between two potential mounts, with last year's runner-up Djakadam and the brilliant Vautour both going for gold.

"I wasn't even riding when Ruby had the choice between Kauto Star and Denman. I remember sitting down and watching it and thinking it was a great position to be in, and now here I am five or six years later and I'm in that position, so I'm very lucky," said Cooper.

"The way I look at it is it would be a lot worse if I was sitting
someo
"Th
much
is in a
me thi
gets it
himse
Ass
jockey
time o
starts
coat st
this is
"Do
when
at Leo
day. H

on Cossack 7

orm: -111F1
ainer: Gordon Elliott
ge: 9
old Cup 2015: NA

n obvious contender llowing his Grade One ctory at Down Royal rlier in the season, but fell when looking ely to challenge Cue rd in the King George Kempton. Redeemed mself with victory at hurles last time, but he d not totally impress at day and could well ll short ehind his d dversary gain. **8**

an mes ds: 1

Don Poli 8

Form: 11-511
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 7
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Looked a natural pretender to this crown when winning the RSA last March and that impression was only confirmed when he saw off National hero Many Clouds at Aintree in December. He was merely workmanlike in winning the Lexus when heavy ground was not ideal, but remains a live contender. **7**

Stan James odds: 11-2

Gilgamboa 9

Form: 21-345
Trainer: Enda Bolger
Age: 8
Gold Cup 2015: NA

A classy novice, he has not really made the transition to the highest level in full company and was well beaten by Carlingford Lough last time out at Leopardstown in the Irish Gold Cup. Prior to that was fourth in the Paddy Power Chase at the same track and looks out of his depth here. **2**

Stan James odds: 66-1

Holywell 10

Form: 43-54P
Trainer: Jonjo O'Neill
Age: 9
Gold Cup 2015: 4

Fourth in the race last year and then came third in the Betfred Bowl at Aintree, but has looked nowhere near the same horse since and is hard to recommend. Well beaten by Cue Card in both the Charlie Hall and Betfair Chase and pulled up in the Sky Bet Chase last time out. **3**

Stan James odds: 50-1

Irish Cavalier 11

Form: 42155P
Trainer: Rebecca Curtis
Age: 7
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Winner of the Listed novices' chase at this meeting last year, but counts only an intermediate chase win at Newton Abbot on his tally this term and looks outclassed. Was fifth in the Paddy Power Gold Cup and well beaten in the King George and since at Cheltenham. **2**

Stan James odds: 100-1

mad Place 18

orm: 4-1141
ainer: Alan King
ge: 9
old Cup 2015: 8

on the trial for this ce in January, when amming Many Clouds 12 lengths in the etBright Chase, to add his Hennessy success, t was thoroughly und out when fourth ehind Cue Card in the ng George – form hich should prove hard turn ound. **6**

an mes ds: -1

The Giant Bolster 19

Form: -F7942
Trainer: David Bridgwater
Age: 11
Gold Cup 2015: P

Something of a standing dish in this race and has finished second, third and fourth, but pulled up last season and is now winless since January 2014. Finished second in the Denman Chase at Newbury last month, but was well beaten behind Houblon Des Obeaux and this looks beyond him now. **2**

Stan James odds: 100-1

Valseur Lido 20

Form: 6-12FU
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 7
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Failed to complete on his last two starts, but looked all over the winner of the Irish Gold Cup before unshipping Ruby Walsh at the final fence. A repeat of that, and safe negotiation of all obstacles, make him a leading player – despite Djakadam having slammed him over an inadequate trip earlier in the year. **9**

Stan James odds: 16-1

Vautour 21

Form: 211-12
Trainer: Willie Mullins
Age: 7
Gold Cup 2015: NA

Beaten just a head by Cue Card in the King George, but given he has yet to triumph over further than two miles and five furlongs, there must be question marks about his stamina, which are further underlined by his preference for making all of the running. That said, though, has some terrific form in the book. **6**

Stan James odds: 9-2

CHRIS WILSON'S GOLD CUP VERDICT

CUE CARD has all the ticks in the right boxes and while you have to take his ability to stay on up the Cheltenham hill on trust, he has been better than ever this season and comes into the race as the clear form pick.

VALSEUR LIDO looks an up-and-coming stayer who can avenge his 12-length defeat at the hands of DJAKADAM back in December by emerging best of the Mullins team to take the runner-up prize.

1 CUE CARD
2 Valseur Lido
3 Djakadam

Jonjo O'Neill's Minella Rocco

NICK ROBSON finds a magnificent seven horses that might play a part in holding up the 'home' defence against Willie Mullins and company at Cheltenham:

1) YANWORTH (Alan King)
Considered the 'home' banker by many, this chestnut looked in a different league to some smart rivals when stepping up in trip for the first time at Cheltenham on Trials Day. He had the class to go close in the Bumper last year and even Willie Mullins may struggle to beat this one.

2) THISTLECRACK (Colin Tizzard)
He has been an absolute revelation this season, remaining unbeaten. Having shown only flashes of decent form before heading to Aintree last term, that win was seen by many as a fluke. But he was unlucky not to follow up at Punchestown and quite simply looks in a different league to many in the World Hurdle.

3) BRISTOL DE MAI (Nigel Twiston-Davies)
Still only five, this grey jumps like an old hand. He has been doing his winning in deep mid-winter ground but he showed at Aintree last season that racing on a faster surface holds no fears to him. The trip of the JLT looks tailor-made.

4) ALTIOR (Nicky Henderson)
He might be coming up against the talking horse Min in the opening Supreme Novices' Hurdle, but there is far more substance to his form. In beating Open Eagle as comfortably as he did at Christmas, he showed that Min will have to be every bit as good as his connections say he is.

5) BARTERS HILL (Ben Pauling)
If he were trained by a Mullins, Nicholls or Henderson he would surely be odds on. Unbeaten in seven racecourse appearances, he is already a Grade One winner at Newbury in the Challow Hurdle and stepped up to three miles at Doncaster last time out. He has very little to prove.

6) MINELLA ROCCO (Jonjo O'Neill)
There was a time when Jonjo O'Neill dominated the four-mile National Hunt Chase and this JP McManus novice looks to fit the bill. At one stage he looked set to be good enough for the RSA, but his early efforts were uninspiring. A fast-finishing second in the Reynoldstown got the wheels back in motion, though, and he will take some stopping.

7) NEXT SENSATION (Michael Scudamore)
He should arguably be going for a hat-trick in the Grand Annual, having set off like a scalded cat two years ago but clinging on for fourth and winning last year. Some lenient handicapping and canny placement means he will return off just 1lb higher than when a year ago.

g in the canteen and one else was riding. ey're not making as heat about it, but Ruby very similar position to s year and I know if he wrong he'll be kicking lf for a long time."

essing both horses, the added: "It's really this f year Don Cossack to come to himself. His tarts to come out and his time of year.

on Poli was his usual self he schooled after racing pardstown the other He never sets the world alight with anything he does, but he jumped fantastic and I couldn't be happier with him."

Cooper has plenty of other big-race rides to look forward to, including RSA Chase favourite No More Heroes.

He said: "I think A Toi Phil has got a good chance in the Neptune.

"There's also Killer Crow in the novice handicap chase on the first day.

"I suppose No More Heroes would be my best chance.

"He's the one that stands out, but I've a great book of rides."

Bryan Cooper, on Don Poli, *left*, and Don Cossack, *right*, has a tough choice to make

NEW CUSTOMER OFFER
BET £10 GET £20 FREE BET
StanJames.com
For the bettors
Bet £10 Get £20 offer for new accounts only, opened via web or mobile. First bet must be a minimum of £10 at 4/5 or greater

Festival in focus

Bart's a dream come true for Weeks' Circle

WITHOUT doubt one of the most popular horses running at the Festival is Ben Pauling's unbeaten Barters Hill and for one of the members of the syndicate who own him it has been like winning "the horse lottery".

Randy Weeks is one of eight shareholders with his wife, Eileen, in the Circle Of Friends group fortunate enough to be heading to the meeting with the hot favourite for the Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle.

The chief executive of a marketing and advertising company, he has been a member at Cheltenham for over 20 years and known Pauling's parents even longer.

You get the impression the group are having the time of their lives and win, lose or draw to just be heading to Prestbury Park is making their dreams come true. Having knocked back a stream of big-money offers, they are in it for the long haul.

"There are eight shares, the core group are just a bunch of friends of Ben's parents," said Weeks.

"Myself and my wife, Eileen, Graham and Victoria Dunn, Pat and Pete Colson and Nikki Knott, a farmer, we've all known Ben since he was tiny.

"Then there's Ben's aunt and uncle, Mark and Wendy Dancer, Ben's mother-in-law Annie Finch, George Machell, who is married to Annie's brother and Steve and Patricia Capper, who were introduced to us all by Ben and fitted right in. Bart cost £16,000 by the time he got back from Ireland so it was £2,000 a share. Some people agreed to it, but as so often happens when it came to putting the money up they backed out, so Ben was left with three shares which he was a bit nervous about.

"Our first objective was to support Ben in his new venture; we've known him as a man and boy. Secondly we wanted to enjoy the journey of a young horse starting out and thirdly we just wanted to have fun. It's fair to say we've ticked all three boxes."

Barters Hill was a 25-1 winner on his debut at Huntingdon in November 2014 and followed up with a win at Warwick, before he came to attention when winning a Listed bumper at Newbury.

"The Newbury race was very hot with Altior and Buveur D'Air – I think there were half-a-dozen unbeaten horses and that was when the big offers started rolling in," said Weeks.

"What really pleased me was that not one member of the group wanted to take the money, they all wanted the dream to continue.

"After he'd won the Listed bumper at Newbury I assumed we'd be going for the Champion Bumper, but Ben sat me down and explained why he thought it wouldn't be the best race for him in the long term and that we'd go to Aintree instead."

An unblemished season over hurdles has followed, with a Grade One win in the bag and a gutsy victory in the River Don at Doncaster his most recent effort.

Weeks went on: "When I sit back and look at this story, 20 years or more a member at Cheltenham, I feel like I've won the horse lottery.

"I've dreamt about just being in the parade ring before a race with a horse, but to be going there with a favourite's chance is a dream come true.

"What's great is that Ben has entered six for the meeting and three of those will be going with real live chances, and having known him since he was two, I'm very proud."

Mullins keeps his expectations low

by Ashley Iveson

Closutton trainer says just having half the amount of eight winners he had in 2015 would make him content

WILLIE MULLINS will travel to Cheltenham with another astonishingly strong army of equine talent behind him and the weight of a punting nation on his shoulders.

Ireland's all-conquering champion trainer will send a squad of around 60 to do battle in the Cotswolds and, having saddled a record eight winners over the four days last March, expectations are high that he can at least match that figure if not surpass it.

I made the journey to County Carlow to catch up with the master of Closutton to find out how he handles the pressure, reflect on his astonishing dominance of last year's meeting and his hopes and dreams for this year...

On whether he can enjoy the Cheltenham Festival: "With having two or three runners in every race, it just goes so fast," said Mullins.

"You don't get chance to enjoy it or be disappointed because we're thinking about the next race, what I'm going to say to the jockeys, or even if I'm going to have time to talk to them.

"In an evening we find a bit of time for relaxation and have dinner and a few drinks, so it can be fun. I think you have to enjoy it for what it is. I'm in a lucky position with the owners, horses and staff that I have.

> *I haven't set myself any targets. I just want one winner and to get on the board*
>
> ***– Willie Mullins***

"It's just extraordinary and as stressful as it is, it's fantastic and you just hope to have winners to match the team."

On saddling four winners on the first day last year: "It just happened so fast and you just want it to keep going.

"It's just too busy between talking to the press, owners and media to even think about what was happening and I couldn't really believe it.

"The Festival is front-loaded, with all those good races on the first day. It's great to get your name on the board and we've been very lucky the last couple of years to get more than one on the first day.

"It would be great to do that again and we could have a fantastic first day this year, but things could change."

On expectations for this year: "We go to the Festival all the time hoping. Other people expect us to have four plus winners and will be disappointed if we don't have at least three winners on the first day, but it's not as easy as that. We go to the races to find out what will happen, otherwise we'd just sit here and write out the results.

"It's sport. The favourite team doesn't win all the time, the underdog comes up and someone is going to have a fantastic winner.

"A lot of things have to go right. Last year most things went right.

"We had eight winners and I'd be delighted to have even half that amount. I think people are expecting us to do things that are nearly impossible.

"The amount of expectation that is put up by the media is huge and we try not to get carried away with it.

"I suppose when we have a favourite win it's a relief. If you win a handicap with a 25-1 shot that's fantastic and you probably get more enjoyment out of that.

"I haven't set any targets. I just want one winner and to get on the board. I think that's every trainer's target."

On outside reaction to defeat: "When we have a disappointing favourite or maybe a horse fall, you get emails from people slagging you off like you wouldn't believe.

"Some are funny and you might read them and show someone else and then bin them, others you delete straight away.

"With my son and two nephews riding, if something doesn't go their way, people will say they're only riding because they're related to me. They're riding because they're good enough.

"You should have seen the stuff we got after Annie Power (fell). People thought we'd done it on purpose! You wouldn't believe it. It's absolutely incredible."

On deciding which horses run in which races: "We look at the ground and myself and Ruby (Walsh) have a chat at some stage before the meeting to go through what he might like to ride. Sometimes that will determine a lot. Gigginstown might say they prefer to do this or that and unless we find a reason not to, or unless I totally disagree, that's what we'll try to do.

"Everyone has different opinions. I chat to my staff every morning and they'll say we should go for this or we should go for that. They're riding the horses every day.

"You take everyone's view."

Willie Mullins with mare Annie Power

LEADING TRAINERS

Top current trainers at the Cheltenham Festival

53 Nicky Henderson
41 Willie Mullins
37 Paul Nicholls
25 Jonjo O'Neill
18 Philip Hobbs
18 Edward O'Grady
15 Nigel Twiston-Davies
15 Alan King
13 David Pipe

BEST ODDS GUARANTEED
LIVE STREAMING
NICKY HENDERSON WEEKLY BLOGS
StanJames.com For the bettors

Festival in focus

Test your Cheltenham knowledge: page 8

Ex-banker eyes more success under Mullins' watchful eye

American Ricci eyes a Festival windfall

by Nick Robson

AT the height of the financial crisis back in 2013, Rich Ricci was described by one newspaper as "the poster child for the excesses of the investment banking industry".

For Willie Mullins, Ricci would likely be better known as manna from heaven as the Closutton handler houses the owner's string of National Hunt superstars.

While Faugheen's injury has seen him ruled out of a Stan James Champion Hurdle defence, Ricci still has the likely favourite for the two-mile hurdling crown after wonder-mare Annie Power was drafted in as an apparent super-sub.

The owner's embarrassment of Festival riches also includes the seemingly unbeatable Arkle contender Douvan, Supreme Novices' Hurdle hotpot Min and OLBG Mares hope Vroum Vroum Mag.

Cheltenham would be a long way from Ricci's first racing experiences though, with the American-born former Barclays chief pointing to 1973 Triple Crown winner Secretariat as his first real racing memory.

However, it did not take Ricci long to fall in love with the quintessentially British and Irish sport of steeplechasing, and his blissful rise to the top of the owning ranks began in earnest.

He said: "It's been an incredible ride and, in fairness, when I got involved with the sport I wanted to campaign at the highest level. The first

Min

Vautour

Vroum Vroum Mag

Douvan

> *When I came to this country 20 years ago, Cheltenham just appealed to me*
> ***– Rich Ricci***

Cheltenham winner I had in 2009 I thought 'wow, isn't this wonderful?'. To have the fortune and luck we've had has been unbelievable.

"It doesn't last forever, though, and you've got to enjoy these things. It's been a dream ride and a dream come true, and long may it continue.

"I watched Secretariat on television and the Kentucky Derby was a big thing in our house. I always thought it was a wonderful sport.

"When I came to this country 20 years ago, Cheltenham just appealed to me and I fell in love with it."

Ricci did not seek out Mullins, but fate intervened and the rest, as they say, is history.

"It was a friend of mine who introduced me to Willie and, after that, we just hit it off as friends," said Ricci. "The funny thing is it could have been anyone – Paul Nicholls, Nicky Henderson – that I could have been introduced to, it just happened to be Willie.

"I try to get to the yard four times a year. I will always be there in the autumn as it's a great time of year to see the new ones and how the older ones have summered.

"The thing is because I am so associated with Willie, why run about having horses with other big trainers? It would create so much noise about whether I had fallen out with Willie. The noise would be more trouble than it's worth."

Douvan is widely regarded as the Ricci banker this year and there will be plenty of broken hearts, and empty wallets, if he does not carry his owner's famous pink silks past the post in first place in the two-mile novice heat. The six-year-old landed the odds in the Supreme last year and is a very skinny price for the Arkle following three effortless wins over fences, including two at Grade One level, this term.

Ricci believes Douvan to be the equine equivalent of Cary Grant and thinks the sky could really be the limit.

He said: "He is so elegant and is such a wonderful mover. He is a monster. He is so tall if he was a human he would be Cary Grant.

"He does things effortlessly and he knows he is good looking. I just hope he stays sound as he could be anything.

"He is the most friendly horse and just a pleasure to have."

The race Ricci would most like to win is the Gold Cup, one of the few prizes to have so far eluded Ireland's all-conquering champion trainer. The owner is ready to fire a formidable twin assault, with last year's runner-up Djakadam joined by the brilliant Vautour, arguably the most impressive winner of the Festival last March after a jaw-dropping JLT Novices' Chase display.

There are question marks over both, however, with Vautour appearing not to stay when second in the King George, and Djakadam suffering a cut when falling in the Cotswold Chase at Cheltenham in January.

"We want to do our best to try to win the Gold Cup, but I want Willie Mullins to win it first and foremost," said Ricci.

"Vautour is that little bit classier, while Djakadam is the proven stayer."

Whatever the outcome of Cheltenham, 'proven stayer' is exactly what Ricci has been for the jumping game.

De Boinville: It's terrific to see Sprinter back in such great Nic

by Graham Clark

FOR National Hunt racing fans across the country, the anticipated clash between Un De Sceaux and Sprinter Sacre in the Betway Queen Mother Champion Chase is perceived as the potential highlight of the meeting at this year's Festival.

It is a match-up reminiscent of a classic boxing encounter pitting a fallen former champion on the come back path to glory after a brief spell in the wilderness against the new kid on the block with the world seemingly at his feet. To watch and absorb such a spectacle being played out will be special in its own right, but to be part of the story is something that is restricted to only a lucky few.

One man who will have a significant bearing on the outcome of events is Nico de Boinville, rider of the Nicky Henderson-trained Sprinter Sacre, and someone, who like most of the racing world, was impressed by the manner of his arch rival's success last time out in the Clarence House Chase at Ascot.

He said: "Un De Sceaux looked very impressive. You couldn't really fault him. The way he quickened up, turning into the straight was impressive.

"We've got our work cut out and if you go on the form of Sire De Grugy, we are going to have to step up again.

"I won't be riding to beat Un De Sceaux as you just have to ride Sprinter as he wants to be ridden and see how the race pans out.

"His jumping could well help him. He is a very reliable and economical jumper. Un De Sceaux has made mistakes in the past."

Although fearful of the Willie Mullins-trained warrior, who is unbeaten in all his completed starts, the Gold Cup-winning jockey is not playing down the chances of his mount, having been an integral part of his rejuvenation both at home and on track this season.

After winning the Shloer Chase at Cheltenham in November, the seven-time Grade One winner emphasised that was no flash in the pan with a rallying success under de Boinville when mastering Sire De Grugy in the Desert Orchid Chase at Kempton.

He said: "I wouldn't put a percentage as to where he is. I think we've done a great job getting him back to this kind of ability.

"I'm not saying he will ever be that scintillating as he once was, but to go with a great chance is just a great feeling because a year and a half ago we were wondering where the hell we were.

"He has had a good break and the guv'nor is doing his best to freshen him up for Cheltenham.

"If he reproduces the form he showed round Cheltenham the first time, then I think we've got a great chance."

EXTRA PLACES
5 PLACES IN THE CORAL CUP
5 PLACES IN THE PERTEMPS
4 PLACES IN THE TRIUMPH HURDLE
5 PLACES IN THE COUNTY HURDLE
StanJames.com
For the bettors
Extra places available from 10am on the selected race day. General terms and conditions apply. See www.stanjames.com for more info.Gamble responsibly. www.gambleaware.co.uk. 18

Betting

Fab Ferof poised for Ryanair win

by James Stevens

VETERAN **Al Ferof** can build on his King George performance and claim the spoils in Thursday's Ryanair Chase (2.50).

Since joining from the Paul Nicholls yard back in October, Dan Skelton has brought out the best in the horse who looked impressive when destroying the field in the Peterborough Chase, winning by an eventual 40 lengths.

He soon followed up the victory at Huntingdon by a solid run at Kempton, behind Cue Card and Vautour.

The veteran 11-year-old has recorded three victories at Cheltenham including in the 2011 Festival.

Market leaders Vautour and Road To Riches both look set to take on the Gold Cup, making the former Supreme Novice winner the one to beat.

Shantou Village finished second behind hot Neptune favourite Yarmouth when they met at the Gloucestershire track, but with better ground in his favour he can return back to winning ways in Friday's Albert Bartlett Novices' Hurdle (2.50).

Prior to his defeat on Festival Trials day back in January, he had looked impressive, especially when defeating a competitive Grade Two field at the Open meeting.

Neil Mulholland's six-year-old's biggest threat comes in the form of unbeaten Barters Hill, who is seven from seven, although this represents a big step up in class.

David Pipe's **Broadway Buffalo** holds a strong entry in Thursday's Fulke Walwyn Kim Muir Challenge Cup Handicap Chase (5.30).

Last season he went close in the National Hunt Chase, before a decent effort in France's inaugural Grand Prix D'Automne, where he finished fifth.

Dan Skelton's Al Ferof should go close in Thursday's Ryanair Chase

The eight-year-old finished second on his seasonal bow at Haydock in the National trial and should improve for that.

On board is experienced amateur rider Katie Walsh, the same jockey who has ridden him in last season's Festival, and on his last two starts.

Clan Des Obeaux will hope to provide a big-priced winner for Nicholls as he prepares for Friday's opener JCB Triumph Hurdle (1.30).

Bought from France earlier this year, the four-year-old showed massive potential when storming to a 21-length victory at Newbury.

On his last start in the JCB Triumph Hurdle trial, he was only just defeated by 25-1 outsider Protek Des Flos, but with better ground he has the ability to bounce back and take victory in the Festival.

Cheltenham Festival quiz

1 Coneygree was the hero on the final day, his win in the Gold Cup was the first for a novice since which horse in 1974?
2 On which horse did Sir Tony McCoy have his final Cheltenham Festival ride, and in which position did he finish?
3 Which trainer saddled three winners on the second day of the 2015 Cheltenham Festival? Name the horses.
4 By how far did Faugheen win the Champion Hurdle – a length and a half, five lengths or eight lengths?
5 Which horse was the oldest to triumph at last year's Festival?
6 Ireland was responsible for the first six home in the County Hurdle – Willie Mullins, Tony Martin and which other trainer saddled them?
7 Name the last English-trained winner of the Foxhunter Chase.
8 Alverton, winner of the Gold Cup in 1979, won which race at the previous year's Festival?
9 Which current top trainer partnered Wither Or Which to Champion Bumper glory back in 1996?
10 The Fellow second, Desert Orchid third – name the Cheltenham Gold Cup winner.
11 Which two horses carried Sheikh Mohammed's colours to victory in the Champion Hurdle?
12 The new mares' novice hurdle at this year's Festival is named in honour of which Cheltenham legend?
13 Ruby Walsh is the most successful Cheltenham Festival jockey of all time. Which horse provided him with the first of his 45 Festival winners to date?
14 Kauto Star had his first run at the Festival in which race, and what happened?
15 The great Istabraq had his final run in the Champion Hurdle won by which horse?

ANSWERS

1 Captain Christy; **2** Ned Buntline (fourth in the Grand Annual); **3** Paul Nicholls (Aux Petits Soins – Coral Cup, Dodging Bullets – Champion Chase and Quiafando – Fred Winter); **4** A length and a half; **5** The Package (12-year-old – Kim Muir); **6** Eddie Harty (Sort It Out, second); **7** Baby Run (2010); **8** Arkle Challenge Trophy; **9** Willie Mullins; **10** Garrison Savannah (1991); **11** Kribensis (1990) and Royal Gait (1992); **12** Dawn Run; **13** Alexander Banquet, 1998 Champion Bumper; **14** 2006 Queen Mother Champion Chase, fell at the third fence; **15** Hors La Loi III, 2002.

CARE AFTER COMBAT

CONCORDE FESTIVAL

HOSTED BY JIM DAVIDSON

24th TO 27th APRIL 2016

DAY 1 SUNDAY 24th APRIL

HOUSE MATES

BOX OFFICE: 02380 613 989

Jim will be joined by his former housemates from Celebrity Big Brother as well as previous occupants, including Casey Batchelor, Chloe Jasmine & Stevi, Keith Chegwin and various other housemates. Watch out for Davro!

DAY 2 MONDAY 25th APRIL

"SHEP AHOY!"

3 former members of the Royal Navy to entertain, hosted by Jim, including a local comedian Mike Osman, Shep Woolley and a special guest star TBA.

DAY 3 TUESDAY 26th APRIL

AN EVENING WITH THE SAS

Legendary Soldier "1" will present the Iranian Embassy Siege. A unique dramatisation using slides and film, from one of the original participants.

DAY 4 WEDNESDAY 27th APRIL

"40 YEARS OF ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS" with Guests

WWW.THECONCORDECLUB.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK CALL: 02380 613 989

DESIGNED BY: breamteam.com

79 Parchment St

FINE JEWELLERS

Winchester

antiquefinejewellry

Antique & Pre-Owned
Fine Jewellery Bought
& Sold
New Gold & Silver Jewellery
Charms And Troll Beads
Please Come in and
Look Around
Telephone: 01962 860202
antiquefinejewellery@hotmail.com

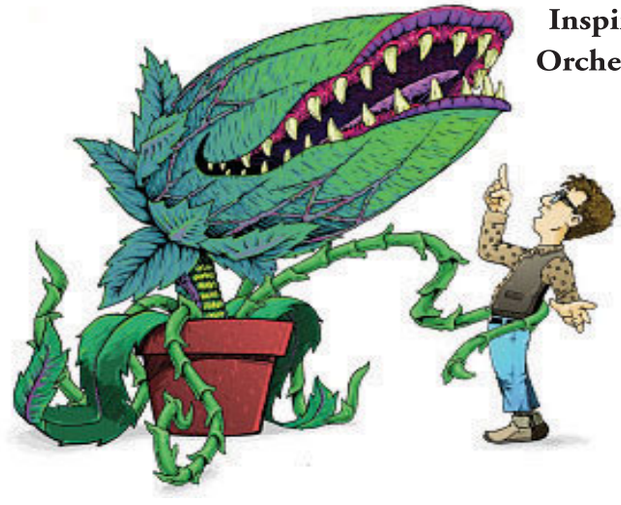
INSPIRATION

bournemouth symphony orchestra

Seize the day

The songs of Alan Menken

O2 Guildhall Southampton
Sunday 10 April 3pm



Inspiration Choir Southampton and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra perform famous works by Disney's greatest composer

Pieces include
Under the Sea from *The Little Mermaid*
Beauty and the Beast
Little Shop of Horrors
Prince Ali from *Aladdin*
I See the Light from *Tangled*
Raise Your Voice from *Sister Act*
Pocahontas
and more!

Pete Harrison conductor

023 8063 2601 BSOlive.com

SOUTHERN Daily Echo

FIND THE BALL

THIS WEEK'S JACKPOT

£27,000

or £1,000 nearest miss prize...

PLUS 70 consolation prizes of £15 each week

20 for Southern Daily Echo
20 for Daily Echo Bournemouth
10 for Dorset Echo
10 for Sunday Independent
10 for Brighton Argus

FIND THE BALL is a test of skill and football knowledge and is open to readers of the Southampton, Bournemouth, Dorset Echos, Brighton Argus and Sunday Independent, Plymouth.

You have to use your skill and judgement to determine the exact centre of the ball.

Mark an X with a ballpoint pen on the picture where you consider that position to be–clear rubber stamps and self adhesive labels will also be accepted.

Every coupon will be carefully examined and the jackpot prize will be paid to the entrant whose cross marks the exact centre of the ball when the photograph was taken.

If the Jackpot is not won, £1,000 will be added to next week's jackpot.

The nearest-miss prize of £1,000 will be paid out each week to the competitor whose cross is nearest to the centre of the ball when there is no jackpot winner.

When a jackpot has been won the next week's prize reverts back to £5,000 and the nearest-miss prize stays at £1,000.

If the Jackpot is not won after 46 weeks, when standing at £50,000, the nearest miss prize of £1,000 will be paid out and the jackpot will remain at £50,000 each week until there is a jackpot winner, then the jackpot starts again at £5,000, with the nearest miss prize remaining at £1,000 each week.

If there is more than one winner the jackpot will be shared and, similarly, if there is more than one runner-up the nearest miss prize will also be shared.

RESULTS

CLOSING DATE FOR POSTAL ENTRIES
Thursday 9am, 17th March, 2016
Names of winners will be published on **Saturday, 19th March or Sunday 20th March 2016**

Winners

Competition number S09

JACKPOT WINNER NO WINNER

CONGRATULATIONS
A Taylor, Cowes, I.O.W
who wins the nearest miss prize of £1,000

The following competitors each receive a consolation prize of £15

R Brading	Southampton, Hants	H Marsh	Southampton, Hants
B Butt	W Cowes, I.O.W	J O'Neill	New Milton, Hants
I Chandler	Southampton, Hants	P O'Neill	Southampton, Hants
C Collins	Southampton, Hants	M Petherick	Eastleigh, Hants
I Dowse	Salisbury, Wilts	R Ramsden	Southampton, Hants
P Harbut	Southampton, Hants	C Smith	Southampton, Hants
B Joy	Salisbury, Wilts	E Stickland	Southampton, Hants
K Knight	Southampton, Hants	A Summerton	Chandlers Ford, Hants
B Lamb	Southampton, Hants	T Thomas	Southampton, Hants
C Langdown	Southampton, Hants	R Toomer	Southampton, Hants

Rules

1. You are allowed a minimum of 60 crosses and a maximum of 450 per coupon. Coupons with 451 or more will be disqualified. Entries altered defaced or mutilated will be invalid. Crosses must be distinct and separate. 2. Competitors may submit as many coupons as they wish. Members of a family can send their entries in one envelope with a covering postal order or cheque. 3. No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, lost or mislaid. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. 4. Payment may be made by postal order or cheque for the correct amount payable to Newsquest, and crossed '& Co.' Stamps will not be accepted in payment. 5. A competitor cannot win more than one share of the prize money across all titles each week. 6. The Editor's decision on winning entry or entries and matters relating to this competition is binding in honour only. NO CORRESPONDENCE CAN BE ENTERED INTO. 7. Employees of NEWSQUEST Media Group and subsidiary companies and members of their families are not eligible to enter the competition. 8. Address entries to FTB, Newspaper House, Test Lane, Southampton, SO16 9JX in a sealed envelope. Understamped entries are not accepted. 9. Prize monies are held for and on behalf of winners. 10. Do not send cash in the post. 11. Winners will be required to participate in publicity. 12. Photocopies not accepted. 13. For rules go to www.dailyecho.co.uk/promotions/rules, www.newsquest.co.uk/terms or write in for a copy. 14. If you pay by cheque your prize money will be paid to you once cheque has cleared.

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE ONLY

An incident in an Sholing v Salisbury match

SAVE POSTAGE
For your convenience coupons may be posted in our **FIND THE BALL** collecting boxes located at selected newsagents and all branch offices

Deadlines for branch office collection boxes are as follows:
Bournemouth Echo 12 noon Tuesday
Southern Daily Echo 12noon Tuesday
Dorset Echo Closing time Monday

Deadlines for selected newsagents collection boxes as listed in:
Bournemouth Echo closing time Monday
Southern Daily Echo 10.00 am Tuesday
Dorset Echo Closing time Monday

A list of participating newsagents will be published in the Echos on the first Saturday of each month

Please use black/blue ink and capitals

12 March, 2016

TITLE ☐ MR ☐ MRS ☐ MISS ☐ MS
FIRST NAME _____
SURNAME _____
ADDRESS _____
_____
POSTCODE _____
DAYTIME TELEPHONE _____
S10
I enclose cash/cheque/postal order Value £'s _____

On what day(s) do you purchase the Daily Echo?
☐ MON ☐ TUE ☐ WED ☐ THURS ☐ FRI ☐ SAT

Do you have the paper home delivered?
☐ YES ☐ NO

Please cross box

60 CROSSES	£1
125 CROSSES	£2
200 CROSSES	£3
325 CROSSES	£4
450 CROSSES	£5

CASH PRIZE EVERY WEEK

Please complete entry form and send to: **FTB Newspaper House, Test Lane, Southampton SO16 9JX**
Cheques payable to newsquest

SOUTHERN Daily Echo

SAINTS SPOTLIGHT

Have powers-that-be gone far enough ..?

BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

BY DAREN WHEELER

ONCE again the hot topic of the week is ticket prices with the news that the Premier League is looking to implement a £30 price limit for away fans' tickets.

You could say it's long overdue, but is it really that much of a concession from the powers that be?

It is rumoured that the new Sky deal would mean that clubs could allow fans to go for free and still have the same income as they do right now.

If that is the case then it puts the £30 limit firmly into perspective.

In terms of prices in the Premier League, Saints are firmly mid-table, the only clubs charging more are the clubs you'd expect to charge more - your Liverpools, your Tottenhams and your Manchester Uniteds.

That would indicate that to compete for a European place you have to charge more, which is understandable.

When you bear in mind that the clubs that are competing for promotion in the Championship are also pretty much on a par with Saints in regard to ticket prices, you begin to see a pattern: that to compete for anything in football, the fans have to pay more.

It does make you question the role of football owners in all of this.

The days of sugar daddies bankrolling the big transfers appear to long gone as chairman now look to merchandising and Sky money to fund clubs.

Whilst the reduction in away fans tickets prices is welcome, it does make you wonder whether the same consideration will be shown to home fans?

A recent BBC ticketing survey showed that,for Saints fans, home tickets worked out 20 per cent more expensive than away tickets.

We could easily find ourselves in the position of having one set of fans at a football ground paying less for their tickets yet enjoying essentially the same view.

The answer to away ticket prices will inevitably lead to the usual argument about loyalty.

Surely the fan that supports his club away from home is more loyal?

Are they? Who are any of us to judge what constitutes loyalty?

What if the home fan really can't afford his ticket but makes concessions elsewhere to be able to afford it? What if the away fan has enough money to afford an away day?

Who is the more loyal there, then?

The answer is multi-layered and incredibly complex and, to a certain degree, subjective. It's virtually impossible to say who's more loyal.

Premier League fans - away ones, anyway - will pay no more than £30 next season.

Junior doctors protest about their contracts.

The more you meet Saints fans, the more in awe you become of their loyalty and dedication. I would find it impossible to gauge loyalty.

The Premier League needs to look at all fans, not just the away fans and ask are they making the game affordable for the working man/woman?

a season ticket at Southampton comes in at a price range of £540 to £853, the answer would have to be 'no' If the average yearly wage is £27,000 it's fair to say that season ticket price is a huge amount out of that wage.

When you then bear in mind that most working class football fans are more likely to be on £15,000 to £20,000. then that season ticket price takes on a more sinister appearance.

Football is one of life's great levellers.

No matter what class you are or what job you have, the football results on a Saturday afternoon brings people together.

It would seem, though, that what money you earn and what job you have now tears us apart.

Football has always been the working man/woman's pastime. It is fundamentally wrong to price that working man/woman out of the sport.

No matter how much you tart it up, football will always be the sport of the people. From kids kicking cans on street corner to kids having a knockabout on the common with jumpers for goalposts to office workers kicking a bit of paper around the office when no one's watching.

Football, more than any other sport, can be played anywhere.

Never more was the divide more evident that the Rio World Cup, where the glitterati of football played the game for billions whilst the poor of Brazil kicked a can around in the slums of Rio.

Whilst I'm not comparing that with the situation here in the UK, it's a suitable comparison to remind us what we should never aspire to.

I've said it before, I'll say it again, but the real issue with football isn't ticket prices - it's player wages. Solve that issue and you'll solve the problems with football in this country.

Introduce a wage cap and you'll start to produce an even playing field, freeing up revenue for football clubs who can then afford to relax ticket prices.

If Sky Sports folded tomorrow, then the ramifications on English football would be catastrophic.

In closing, this week doctors and their working conditions have been very much in the public eye.

In one corner we have doctors striking for fair working conditions and better money.

In the other corner we have multi millionaire sportsmen whose job is to play one, maybe two,games of football a week.

They train hard… and get paid a huge amount of money to do so, whilst doctors no doubt would have pay money to a gym to keep themselves physically fit.

When you look at it with that perspective, do you really think a footballer should be on so much more money than a doctor? Do you really think the price of tickets is the only issue football has or are there more important, underlying issues that need addressing?

In a week where doctors are very much the focus of our attention, I'd hazard a guess and say football needs help, and not the medical kind…

Fredericks

Come along for your handmade Easter eggs. Filled with traditional sweets or chocolates, the choice is your

Located on the ground floor of the Marlands Centre, Southampton, SO14 7SJ
Tel: 02380 231 100
Email: info@frederickschocolates.co.uk
www.frederickschocolates.co.uk

Great days out to fill your album…

Find out more on our website, or contact us for your free brochure!

Coliseum COACHES
023 8047 2377
www.coliseumcoaches.co.uk

The Mortimer Arms

FUNCTION ROOM AVAILABLE
FABULOUS LOCATION
WEDDINGS * PARTIES
MEETINGS * SKITTLES
CHRISTENINGS * WAKES

Telephone or email for availability or a brochure - Bar and exceptional food menu (if required) from buffet to 3 course sit down dinner we cater for any size function 10 - 100 people

THE MORTIMER ARMS
ROMSEY ROAD
OWER (Jct 2 M27)
ROMSEY, SO51 6AF

02380 814379
www.mortimerarms.co.uk
info@mortimerarms.co.uk

- OPEN 7 DAYS
- FREE ESTIMATES
- 100'S OF BIG BRANDS
- BEDROOM FURNITURE & 100'S OF RUGS
- DISPOSAL OF OLD FLOORING & BEDS

BEDS, MATTRESSES, CARPETS, FLOORING & BEDROOM FURNITURE

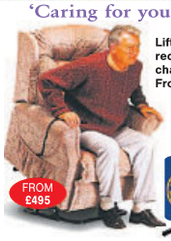
GET AN EXTRA 10% OFF STOCK ITEMS WITH THIS VOUCHER

CARPET BARN FLOORING SUPERSTORE
the bed store THE BED SPECIALIST
Parham Drive, Boyatt Wood Industrial Estate, EASTLEIGH. SO50 4NU. Tel: 02380 653600 also at 166a Southampton Road, FAREHAM. PO14 4QL. Tel: 01489 571206
GUARANTEED PRICE MATCH WE'LL BEAT ANY LIKE FOR LIKE WRITTEN QUOTE!!
www.carpetsandbeds.com

GMA GALLAGHER MOBILITY AIDS LTD
'Caring for you'

Free insurance with each new scooter

Lift and reclining chairs From £495



FROM £495

Available here Motability

- USED EQUIPMENT BOUGHT AND SOLD
- HIRE FACILITIES
- FULL MAINTENANCE
- BATH LIFTS

FROM £110

FROM £48

EXTENSIVE RANGE OF WHEELCHAIRS AND 3 & 4 WHEELED WALKERS

Call NOW
Southampton 023 8055 7777
www.disabledaids.org.uk
Independence Building, Belgrave Road, Southampton SO17 3ES
tel: 023 8055 7777
Christchurch
tel: 01425 270666
Finance arranged subject to status

HERITAGE WILL WRITING
The Society of Will Writers

PROFESSIONAL WILL WRITING & INHERITANCE TAX SERVICES

PROVIDING:
- Comprehensive Will Writing
- Home Visits
- Will Amendments and Reviews
- Estate & Inheritance Tax Planning
- Long Term Care Advice
- Hospital & Care Home Visits
- Lasting Power of Attorney
- Wills from £95.00

We provide a friendly, approachable and discrete service and on hand to meet your needs.

Tel: (023) 8087 9243
Email: info@heritagewillwriting.co.uk
www.heritagewillwriting.co.uk

Home Choose Carpets

Over 20 Years Experience
100's of Carpet & Vinyl Samples to choose from, In the comfort of your own Home
• FREE FITTING • FREE ESTIMATES • FREE DELIVERY
We can move your furniture and uplift & dispose of your old carpets
Please Ring 02380 803100
Freephone 0800 0387722
www.home-choose-carpets.com

PP103978

EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Places for People Leisure Ltd working in partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council.

Terms and conditions apply. Membership offer only available 1st to 31st March 2016.

QUALITY KITCHEN FACELIFTS

A new look for your old kitchen this spring

DREAM DOORS®
NEW LIFE FOR OLD KITCHENS

- Huge choice of doors, worktops, appliances, sinks & taps
- From a simple door swap to a complete kitchen refit
- Less time, money and hassle than a full kitchen re-fit

CALL FOR A FREE ESTIMATE: 02380 274413

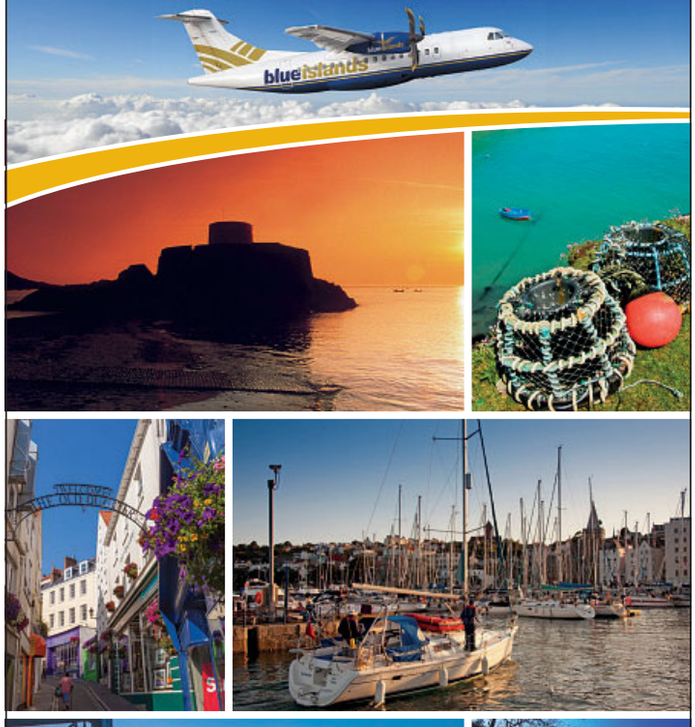
dreamdoors.co.uk

Visit our showroom: FREE PARKING!
8 Falkland Court, Falkland Road, -
Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 3GA

Checkatrade.com
Where reputation matters

Guernsey

A world away in just 45 minutes!



BOOK NOW

Escape to Guernsey and get away from it all without the hassle of long haul...

CHANGES £FREE
DEBIT CARDS £FREE
BAGGAGE £FREE

blueislands.com
A WELCOME DIFFERENCE

Terms and conditions apply.

Eden getting shirty - to fans' dismay

CHELSEA midfielder Eden Hazard risked the wrath of the home support when he decided to swap shirts with Angel Di Maria at half-time during this week's Champions League match against Paris St Germain at Stamford Bridge.

Here, the Sports Pink takes a look at some other times players literally took the shirt off their own back to give it away.

Pele and Bobby Moore

Captured on camera, what was to become one of the most famous football images followed the 1970 World Cup group game between holders England and tournament favourites Brazil in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Pele later said: "The shirt he wore against me in that 1970 match is my prize possession.

"He was my friend as well as the greatest defender I ever played against."

Paulo Ferreira and Ronaldinho

Hazard was not the first Chelsea player to make negative headlines for seeking a personal memento of a key match. Chelsea tackled Barcelona in the 2004/05 Champions League, and at Stamford Bridge had raced into a 3-0

Chelsea's Eden Hazard

lead before the Spaniards recovered, with a double from Ronaldinho.

Defender Ferreira took it upon himself to ask for the Brazilian's shirt at half-time, which did not go down too well, as Chelsea secured a 4-2 win.

Andre Santos and Robin van Persie

Arsenal defender Santos found himself at the centre of a storm when he was quick to grab the shirt of former Gunners team-mate Robin van Persie at half-time during a match at Manchester United in November 2012, for which the Brazil international later apologised.

Mario Balotelli and Pepe

Balotelli was happy to exchange shirts with Pepe after 45 minutes of Liverpool's European game against Real Madrid at Anfield in October 2014, with the home side trailing 3-0. Reds boss Brendan Rodgers, however, was less than impressed.

Oldham v Everton

Oldham caretaker manager Tony Philliskirk took the unusual step of pinning a notice to the dressing room door reminding his squad not to swap shirts in their FA Cup fifth-round tie against Everton in February 2013 - because they might then not have enough left over for their upcoming league game with Stevenage.

Stoke v Saints - clas

SAINTS were today aiming for their first league win at Stoke for ten years.

Here, the Sports Pink looks back at the two clubs' league history in the Potteries.

November 19 1960
Stoke City 1 Saints 2
Division 2

George O'Brien put Saints ahead in the 31st minute, followed by a John Page penalty to make it 2-0 in the 57th minute. Johnny King replied 15 minutes from time.

December 9 1961
Stoke City 3 Saints 2
Division 2

Derek Reeves headed Saints in front with Tommy Mulgrew making it 2-0 in the 38th minute.

But it was downhill from then on as Thompson (2) and Don Ratcliffe inspired a home recovery.

September 15 1962
Stoke City 3 Saints 1
Division 2

Saints played in their old gold strip for the first time with Dave Chadwick scoring his only ever Saints goal.

October 15 1966
Stoke City 3 Saints 2
Division 1

Ron Davies scored two headers – part of his 37-goal top flight haul for the season – but the hosts still won with goals from Peter Dobing, Calvin Palmer and John Ritchie.

September 23 1967
Stoke City 3 Saints 2
Division 1

Stoke took a 2-0 lead with goals from Roy Vernon and Harry Burrows. Martin Chivers then scored either side of Burrows' second with Gordon Banks making a number of important saves.

October 9 1968
Stoke City 1 Saints 0
Division 1

Saints conceded in the 88th minute to Harry Burrows before Ron Davies struck the woodwork 60 seconds later.

August 30 1969
Stoke City 2 Saints 1
Division 1

Jimmy Gabriel opened the scoring for Saints before Harry Burrows, on target for the third season running, and Peter Dobing won the game for Stoke.

November 28 1970
Stoke City 0 Saints 0
Division One

A goalless stalemate saw Saints end their six-game losing streak at The Victoria Ground.

January 22 1972
Stoke City 3 Saints 1
Division One

Tony Byrne's 86th minute goal was just a consolation after Stoke netted through Jimmy Greenhoff (2) and John Ritchie.

November 11 1972
Stoke City 3 Saints 3
Division 1

Denis Smith gave Stoke a fourth minute lead with Jimmy Greenhoff missing a penalty on 10 minutes.

Morgan Schneiderlin puts Saints ahead at the Britannia Stadium last April.

Ex Saint Danny Higginbotham cant contain his delight as Stoke score the winner in 2007/08.

Five minutes later Mick Channon levelled from a spot-kick.

Saints and Stoke exchanged the lead in the second half with John Ritchie and Conroy scoring for the hosts. Ron Davies replied for Saints and the Welshman also set up Bobby Stokes for his 82nd minute equaliser.

March 16 1974
Stoke City 4 Saints 1
Division 1

Peter Osgood's Saints debut ended in a miserable defeat, John Ritchie firing a hat-trick for the hosts. World Cup hero Geoff Hurst also scored while Saints' consolation was an Alan Dodd own goal.

Saints were relegated a few weeks later.

August 24 1977
Stoke City 1 Saints 0
Division 2

Garth Crooks scored the only goal

GOT A STORY FOR US? EMAIL echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

shes in the Potteries

Action from the Victoria Ground in March 1974.

Action from Stoke v Saints in the Potteries in March 1974.

13 minutes from time.

April 20 1980
Stoke City 1 Saints 2
Division 1

Saints came from behind to win after Brendan O'Callaghan had opened the scoring.

Ivan Golac hammered in an unstoppable effort before Phil Boyer headed in the winner on 75 minutes.

March 14 1981
Stoke City 1 Saints 2
Division 1

Kevin Keegan scored twice for Saints before Stoke replied in the 87th minute through Adrian Heath.

November 7 1981
Stoke City 0 Saints 2
Division 1

Kevin Keegan was again on target in a Victoria Ground victory.

David Armstrong hammered in a 20-yard shot on seven minutes before Keegan converted a penalty.

April 23 1983
Stoke City 1 Saints 1
Division 1

Danny Wallace's 88th minute equaliser rescued a point for Saints after George Berry put Stoke ahead.

May 5 1984
Stoke City 1 Saints 1
Division 1

A Mark Wright overhead kick caught out the home keeper and Nick Holmes volleyed into an open net. Phil Maguire levelled for the lowly hosts ten minutes from time.

October 13 1984
Stoke City 1 Saints 3
Division 1

Alan Curtis and Steve Williams were on target with Saints, along with an own goal from Potters defender Paul Dyson. Phil Heath replied.

April 15 2006
Stoke City 1 Saints 2
Championship

Gregorz Rasiak scored his eighth and ninth goals of the season, the first of which was from the penalty spot, in what was Saints' last league victory at Stoke.

Paul Gallagher replied in the 83rd minute.

March 10 2007
Stoke City 2 Saints 1
Championship

Marek Saganowski gave Saints the lead on 14 minutes, but Jon Fortune and Lee Martin hit back for the hosts.

February 12 2008
Stoke City 3 Saints 2
Championship

A Darren Powell own goal gave Stoke a lead that was quickly added to by Ryan Shawcross and Mamady Sidibie. Stern John replied twice in the second half.

December 29 2012
Stoke City 3 Saints 3
Premier League

Rickie Lambert gave Saints a 10th minute lead.

After ex-Saint Kenwyne Jones had levelled, Jay Rodriguez and an own goal from Andy Wilkinson put Nigel Adkins' men 3-1 ahead.

Matt Upson pulled one back for Stoke before Cameron Jerome scored a belter on 90 minutes to make it 3-3 at full time.

November 2 2013
Stoke City 1 Saints 1
Premier League

Stoke keeper Asimir Begovic amazingly scored a wind assisted goal after just 13 seconds of the game. Jay Rodriguez grabbed an equaliser for Mauricio Pochettino's men.

April 18, 2015
Stoke City 2 Saints 1
Premier League

Morgan Schneiderlin tapped home Saints' opener after Jose Fonte's header from Steven Davis's corner.

Stoke pulled level early in the second half as Mame Biram Diouf swept in from 10 yards after Steven Nzonzi's miscued cross rebounded off the bar.

Substitute Charlie Adam volleyed in the winner from close range late on.

Chinese clubs splashing the cash big time

CHINESE clubs outspent their Premier League rivals by more than 100million dollars on international transfers during the countries' two most recent windows.

Sides in the Chinese Super League splashed some serious cash during the close season on overseas imports, with the signing of Liverpool target Alex Teixeira by Jiangsu Suning for almost £39million the biggest individual deal.

Jiangsu also signed Brazil midfielder Ramires from Chelsea, and overall Chinese clubs spent 296m US dollars (£208m) on international transfers between January 1 and February 26, 2016 according to data released this week by FIFA's transfer matching system (TMS).

English top-flight sides spent 181m US dollars between January 1 and February 1 - equating to £127million - according to TMS. Saints' contribution was the £4m on striker Charlie Austin.

The Chinese total was also only 58m US dollars (£41m) lower than the overall amount spent during the winter window by the 'big five' European leagues in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain combined.

However, Chinese spending is still dwarfed when a like-for-like comparison is made between England and China's close-season windows.

Charlie Austin., left

TMS data showed Premier League clubs spent almost one billion US dollars (around £650m) during the summer 2015 window, more than three times the amount spent by Chinese clubs during their close season. Saints spent over £30m of that.

But the Chinese spending is still significant, and has more than trebled from the previous close season total of 86m US dollars, even though only 22 more overseas incoming deals were recorded by TMS in 2016 compared to 2015.

Chinese president Xi Jinping is a big football fan and has tried to encourage the wealthy owners of the clubs to spend big in a bid to raise the Super League's global profile.

Jiangsu are owned by the Suning retail group, while Asian Champions League holders Guangzhou are owned by the Evergrande real estate company.

Other big-name players to have moved to China include former Arsenal winger Gervinho and Colombian forward Jackson Martinez, who joined Guangzhou from Atletico Madrid for £32m.

Jiangsu were also reported to have failed with a £75m bid for Ramires' compatriot and former Chelsea team-mate Oscar.

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH LOCAL SPORT ONLINE AT dailyecho.co.uk

Sunday League spotlight

Ice Sports hit double figures in demolition job

Alex Waterman of Fawley R.B.L Reserves

ICE Sports boasted two hat-trick heroes in their 10-1 Junior 2 destruction of AFC Dorchester.

Callum Drake and Craig Johnson both scored three times as Ice took their goal tally to 48 in ten games and remain three points clear at the top. Matthew Hunt, Ryan Fuller, Jordan Black and Robert King also scored.

A.F.C. Southbrook also had two treble-shooters – Mark Christopher and John Durman sharing six of the goals in an 8-1 home trouncing of Marchwood Rangers. Ryan Longhurst added the other two goals and Aaron Heskins replied.

All the goals came in the second half as Eastpoint triumphed 4-2 at Curbridge. Davey Moore (2), Ben Williams and James Erskine netted for the winners, with James Drewery and Callum Foote replying.

Nathan Gray scored twice as AFC Waterside closed the gap on leaders King George to two points with a 4-2 success against the table-toppers. Michael Baker and Wayne Atkins were also on target with Abraham Kapinga twice replying.

Royal Marine caned Whiteheart United 5-0 with goals from Paul Eades (2), Stuart Fudge, Gift Ngubane and Ricky Sharp.

A first half Brad Smirk goal was enough to seal all three points for Durley at Mottisfont.

Fawley R.B.L Reserves moved nine points clear at the top of Junior 4 with a 4-2 win at Lyndhurst J.F.C. Alex Waterman struck a hat-trick with David Otworoski also on target. Adam Brett & Ali Pugi replied.

Forest Home came from behind to beat Portswood United 2-1 away. Liam Foulds gave Portswood the lead, but second half goals from Josh Bond and Johnny Phillips gave third-placed Forest the points.

Bridge Manor shocked Junior 5 leaders Portswood United Reserves 2-1.

Cameron Roach put Portswood ahead before Josh Bond and Johnny Phillips were on target.

Adam Beston put JSC into an interval lead, but Adam Tahir (2) and Harry Williams hit back for Sporting Compass.

The prolific Wade Wilson was again among the goals as Junior 6 champions-elect Nursling went on another goal spree. He struck four goals in a 7-1 win against Riverside Rangers, with Andrew Long, Shaun New and Mike MacLeod also on target. Josh Willats replied.

Billy Haynes also scored four times as Banister Park caned lowly AFC Carnival 7-1. Jamie Meredith, Michael Jones and Craig Peake also netted, with Adam Chatwin replying for Carnival.

Hunters rely on penalties to book their place in cup final

HUNTERS Inn clinched a place in the Hampshire F.A. Sunday Junior 'B' Cup Final in dramatic style, beating Throop United Reserves 5-4 on penalties.

Following a goalless first half, Jack Solloway fired Hunters into the lead.

Victory should have been all but confirmed in normal time, but Hunters missed an 85th minute penalty and then watched Throop snatch a last-gasp leveller.

With both sides unable to break each other down in extra time, Hunters redeemed their earlier penalty miss by converting all five spot-kicks and booking their place against Wicor Mill in the final.

On target for Hunters in the shoot-out were Penalties: Ben Pearce, Solloway, Henry Rule, Rob Pearce and Ed Haycock

A.F.C Spitfire progressed to the semi-finals of the Charlie Godden Trophy with a 2-0 win at Winsor thanks to second-half goals from Matthew Coulthard and Dawid Wrezel.

Luke Watts blasted four goals as City of Southampton Sunday League top flight leaders Sholing hammered Titans 10-1.

Greg Ainsworth struck a brace with Ben Dashwood, Bobby Lamb, Warren Attrill and Richard Emery also on target. Luke Gibbs replied.

KRL came from 3-1 down to beat Landguard Rovers 4-3 away.

With the scores tied 1-1 at the break, two stunning strikes from Landguard's Jay Dillon and Tunde Akintolou put Rovers in the driving seat.

But KRL hit back through a Stefan Williams double before a last minute winner from Ben Boyce. KRL are now just six points off top spot with a game in hand.

Aiden Johnson fired a hat-trick as Itchen Saints extended their unbeaten Senior Division record with a 5-0 victory over Cricketers Arms.

Luke Watts, left, scored four goals for Sholing United

Richard Warner and Tony Sullivan were also on target.

Second placed Hedge End Athletic kept the pressure on Itchen with a 3-0 home win over Boyatt Wood Wanderers – Joe Williams, Shaun Ridoutt and Aaron Cousens netting.

Sam Knight scored both goals as R.S. Nomansland defeated Yacht Tavern 2-1. Danny Longman replied.

Chamberlayne Athletic extended their lead at the top of the Junior 1 table to nine points with a 4-2 victory over A.F.C Portswood.

Rob North and Eric Makate ensured the scores were level at half-time, before Chamberlayne ran out winners thanks to Martin Hall, Louis Lemessieur, Ryan Stephenson and Lee OsborneA.F.C. Velmore planted more misery on rock-bottom side Test Valley Spartans with a 4-2 win with goals from Ian Attrill, Ron Hassan (2) and Martin Walter.

Lee Portman scored for A.F.C. Riverside in their 1-1 home draw with C.D.A, for whom Matt Watson netted.

Timeline to Byrne's departure

SUNDERLAND chief executive Margaret Byrne this week quit after accepting she made "a serious error of judgment" in advising the club board that £10million winger Adam Johnson could carry on playing following his arrest.

Johnson was briefly suspended after he was held by police in March last year over sex acts with a 15-year-old girl.

But he was cleared to play two weeks later and continued until he admitted two child sex charges in February. He was sacked the following day by the Premier League strugglers and later convicted of a third charge.

Here is a timeline of key events in the case:

2015

January 17: Johnson first met up with the teenager, sitting in his black Range Rover and signing two football shirts for her. He had started messages to the girl the previous December, while partner Stacey Flounders was heavily pregnant with their first child.

January 30: Johnson meets the girl again in his car. He claimed sexual activity went no further than a kiss but the girl said that it had progressed to sex acts.

March 2: Johnson is arrested at his home in Castle Eden, County Durham. He is suspended by Sunderland but two weeks later cleared to continue playing.

His trial heard that police spoke to Sunderland chief executive Margaret Byrne on the day he was arrested.

April 23: Johnson is charged with three offences of sexual activity with a child under 16 and one of grooming.

May 4: Ms Byrne meets with Johnson, his barrister Orlando Pownall QC, and the footballer's father, according to evidence at the later trial. She is given social media messages between Johnson and the girl and police interview transcripts in which he admits kissing her.

June 3: Johnson denies all four charges when he appears at Durham Crown Court.

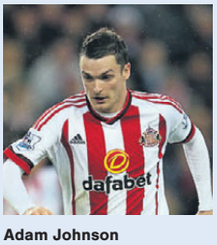
2016

February 10: Johnson pleads guilty on the first day of his trial at Bradford Crown Court to one count of sexual activity with a child and one count of grooming but denies two charges of sexual activity with the girl.

February 11: Johnson is sacked by Sunderland. It is estimated that between being arrested and sacked he will have earned around £3 million.

March 2: Johnson was found guilty at Bradford Crown Court of one count of sexual activity with a child by majority verdict but cleared on a second count.

March 8: Sunderland's chief executive Margaret Byrne's resigns from the club, admitting "a serious error of judgment" in advising the board that the winger could carry on playing after he was initially suspended last March.



Adam Johnson

Hampshire Colleges spotlight

Harry Bayles, left.

Peter Symonds one win from title

PETER Symonds are within one win of lifting the Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges League championship for only the second time in more than 40 years.

They moved to within a cusp of their first title since 1999 with a 9-0 thrashing of South Downs, *writes Mike Vimpany.*

It was the only match – on the 4G artificial surface on Portsdown Hill – that survived the overnight deluge which, once again, decimated the colleges league programme.

It was a game PSC were always expected to win; South Downs have celebrated only once all season and will enjoy themselves more in the B Division next season.

Harry Bayles got things underway for Symonds', who doubled their lead from a Joel Drew penalty.

By half-time PSC were well on their way, with Euan Mathias and Bayles putting the visitors 4-0 up.

Mike Olaore buzzed around and was a constant threat to an overworked South Downs defence and it was his skills on the left-hand edge of the box which set up Drew's second.

Drew crashed a potential hat-trick strike against the bar before Conall Bark got Symonds' sixth.

Ray Richardson added his name to the scoresheet before Des Lai saw a header cleared off the line and Olaore poked in the eighth.

The South Downs keeper made several fine saves including one from Drew, who was denied once again before Bark made it 9-0 from the rebound.

Peter Symonds have two matches left to play – the first against Andover on Wednesday and then Sparsholt to finish what ought to be a champagne season.

Assuming PSC do take the title, it will leave Farnborough, Itchen, Barton Peveril and Brockenhurst to scrap out the potential runners-up spot.

But the main concern will be whether any of them can actually complete their fixtures, so bad has the weather been since the Christmas/New Year break.

Farnborough were due to have played at Brock in midweek.

Their match with Barton Peveril on March 23 will be called off as that's the date of the Peter Munro Cup final, ironically against Brockenhurst.

League chairman Steve Perkins is looking for some dry land to play the final on.

● Itchen's bid to win the English Colleges AoC Cup faltered when they lost 4-0 to Barnet & Southgate in the quarter-finals in midweek.

● The first of the Colleges League cup finals will be played on March 16 with Gosport-based Bay House playing Eastleigh in the 1C final attest Park, 2pm.

The second and third team finals are also due to be played at Test Park, with Peter Symonds facing either Andover or Itchen in the 2nd XI Cup, and Barton Peveril taking on Itchen IV in the 3rd XI final.

Both games are scheduled for March 23.

Totton duo to turn pro with Cherries

THE bright lights of the Barclays Premier League beckon for two promising young footballers from Totton, who began playing together at eight years of age and went to the same school.

Goalkeeper Callum Stanton and midfielder Matt Worthington, both from Testwood Sports College, are among seven promising young players to have just signed full professional contracts for AFC Bournemouth, *writes Mike Vimpany.*

It's a far cry from ten years ago when they played Under-8s mini-soccer together for Pace Panthers at the Southampton Sports Centre.

They went on to play for Southampton Schools in an Under-11 tournament at Wembley, with Stanton keeping goal for the City in the 2010 English Schools' FA Under-13 Cup final at Mk Dons.

For the past two seasons they have been regulars in Cherries' Football League Under-18 Youth Alliance squad – and are now making their mark in the club's Under-21 Development team.

Stanton, who was spotted by Bournemouth in those embryo Pace Panthers days, conceded the least goals by any 'keeper in the South West Division of the Youth Alliance this season.

He was beaten just 22 times in 18 games and helped Cherries finish third in the log – and earn a place in the Merit 1 Under-18 League.

Worthington, a tenacious, ball winning midfielder, had spells with Pompey and Saints before linking up with AFC Bournemouth as a 14-year old.

He too has played his part in Cherries' youth successes this term and has been growing in stature with a succession of goal scoring appearances at Under-21 level.

Callum Stanton, above, and Matt Worthington, right

"It's remarkable that Matt and myself have grown up together, both at school and as footballers," Stanton smiled.

"We played in the same Testwood side which reached the quarter-finals of the England Schools Under-16 Cup a couple of seasons ago and now we've both signed full-time professional contracts at the same time.

"From a personal perspective, signing a pro-contract in my tenth season at Bournemouth has made it a bit special."

If that was a "bit special" just imagine Stanton's reaction when he fielded a call on his mobile phone to report to Bournemouth International Airport to go to Newcastle United with the first team squad last weekend.

"I was relaxing, having a cup of coffee at home at the time, but packed my kit and was out of the house in a flash," he laughed.

"The whole weekend was simply sensational. Not only being with the first team squad, but warming up on the St James's Park pitch before kick off and then savouring a terrific 3-1 win.

"It was a happy flight home and a weekend I'll never forget."

Enjoying the experience of a full-blown Premiership match has whetted Stanton's lips.

"Matt and I are lapping up every minute of our time at Bournemouth.

"Being at a Premiership club was little more than a dream when we turned out for the Cherries' Under-14s a few seasons ago, but it is a fantastic environment to be involved in," he added.

"Being at the club while it has progressed so quickly has been simply amazing.

"I just hope that, somewhere down the line, Stanton and Worthington will be on the Cherries' team-sheet for a Premiership match.

"Now that really would be the making of a dream …"

The great catches …

OMAN'S Zeeshan Maqsood produced a dazzling catch to remove Ireland opener Paul Stirling in Wednesday's World Twenty20 first-round match.

The highlight of the match came when Stirling was dismissed for 29 as his powerful drive looked set to race away for more runs.

Maqsood hurled himself left from extra-cover, reached out a hand, and the ball stuck.

Here is a look at some of cricket's most memorable catches of recent times.

JONTY RHODES, South Africa v England, World Cup, May 1999

The South African is generally acknowledged as cricket's greatest ever fielder. One of the finest examples came at The Oval during the 1999 World Cup when England's Robert Croft drove Lance Klusener high above backward point only to watch dumbfounded as Rhodes leapt high in the air, stretched up his left arm, tipped the ball in the air, kept his eye on it and turned to complete the catch.

ANDREW STRAUSS, England v Australia, fourth Test, August 2005

Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist pushed at an Andrew Flintoff delivery and Strauss flung himself to his left, ''arching his back like a salmon pushing upstream to stay airborne'' in the words of cricket writer Gideon Haigh, to cling on. England won the match by three wickets and edged a stunning series 2-1.

MARTIN van JAARSVELD, Titans v Eagles, MTN Domestic Championship final, January 2009

The Titans won South Africa's one-day cup. The tone was set by Van Jaarsveld in the second over when, fielding at slip, he anticipated Morne van Wyk's sweep at Roelof van der Merwe and ran behind keeper Heino Kuhn to the leg side to pouch a one-handed catch.

BEN STOKES, England v Australia, 4th Ashes Test, 2015

The England all-rounder pulled off the effort that created the social media meme #broadface when he made an Ashes catch to rival Strauss' 10 years earlier. He flung himself back and across, stretching and hanging almost in slow motion to cling on to a stunner. Broad, the bowler, was left astounded.

Andrew Strauss

DOOR 2 DOOR CARS

BOOK ONLINE

TODAT AT

DOOR2DOORCARS.COM

SIMPLE ONLINE FORMS • • FARE GUIDE CALCULATOR • • NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

ANYTIME • • RELIABLE • • TRUSTWORTHY • • ANYWHERE

- STANDARD A TO B JOURNEYS
- AIRPORT TRANSFERS & CRUISE TERMINALS
- CORPORATE ACCOUNTS
- EXECUTIVE TRAVEL
- 4 - 12 SEATERS & WHEELCHAIR VEHICLES

(023) 80393939

BOOKINGS@DOOR2DOORCARS.COM

Ableworld
www.ableworld.co.uk
Your Local Specialist

FINAL SALE CLEARANCE

FINAL CLEARANCE READY FOR SPRING RANGE

Ellen Riser Recliner Chair
Saving £150 on MRP
Now Only
£699.00

Anderton Riser Recliner Chair
Was £745
Sale Price
£725.00

Sasha Riser Recliner Chair
Saving £300 on MRP
Now Only
£449.00

Ambassador Riser Recliner Chair
DUAL MOTOR
- Top of the range comfort chair
- Plus 3 months Free insurance

Was from £995
Sale Price
Now From £945.00
Clearance

Scooters

Veo Boot Scooter
SALE PRICE £449*
SAVE £150 On Previous Price

Veo X Boot Scooter
SALE PRICE £449*
SAVE £150 On Previous Price

Sterling S425 Road Scooter
ONLY £1295*
SAVE £1400 On MRP

Rascal Ventura Road/Pavement Scooter
SALE PRICE £2295*
SAVE £200 On Previous Price

UPTO 30% OFF SELECTED WHEELCHAIRS.

Stairlifts

FREEPHONE 0800 038 7800
FOR A FREE NO OBLIGATION SURVEY
24 Hour Callout Service
We have people on the phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week plus overnight and weekend engineering support
Often Fitted Next Day

UPTO £200 GIFT VOUCHERS WITH ALL NEW STAIRLIFT PURCHASES

STRAIGHT RECONDITIONED STAIRLIFTS FROM ONLY £495*

STRAIGHT NEW STAIRLIFTS: FROM ONLY £1195*

WE BUY BACK STAIRLIFTS - UP TO £500 PAID. ACORN, BROOKS, MINIVATOR & AGE UK Subject to survey and age

Scooters

Travelite Wheelchair
SALE PRICE £90.30*
SAVE £38.70 On Previous Price
Clearance

Enigma XS 18" & 20" Wheelchair
SALE PRICE £160.30*
SAVE £68.70 On Previous Price
Clearance

Super Deluxe Wheelchair
SALE PRICE £265.30*
SAVE £113.70 On Previous Price
Clearance

Wheelchairs Cushions

Memory Foam
SALE PRICE £6.49
SAVE £3.50 On Previous Price

High Risk
SALE PRICE £32.99*
SAVE £12 On Previous Price

SOUTHAMPTON ABLEWORLD
42-46 Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9AD
Email: info@ableworldsouthampton.co.uk
T: (02380) 440000
Open 7 days a week
To see more stores, please visit:
www.ableworld.co.uk | Opposite the Bus Station

facebook.com/ableworld
twitter.com/AbleworldUK

www.ableworld.co.uk
Ableworld are the main mobility retailer in the area approved as a Community Equipment Dispenser
CED
naep
NHS Vouchers Welcome *VAT Exempt - Ask in Store for Details MRP - Manufacturers Recommended Price. Previous Price - Sold for 28 Days in Last 6 months at our Nashish Store
Ableworld are an Appointed Representative of Fish Insurance, who are authorized and regulated by the Financial Services Authority
*Subject to Availability. Whilst Stocks Last

Get the smile you've always dreamed of!

SolutionsDental CLINIC

Louise was a very nervous patient and scared of the dentist. Using sedative medication, which helped to take away Louise's anxiety and phobia, dental implants were placed to help permanently restore her new teeth using our Same Day Teeth procedure.

"I used to be a very nervous patient. But from the first time I met the team I felt at ease. Thanks to their support and amazing skills I now have beautiful teeth that feel like they are part of me. I feel brilliant and can't thank the team enough."

Louise – Same Day Teeth patient

The hand-made teeth we fabricated

Implants used to hold teeth in place

Teeth in position

SAME DAY TEETH™

Book a FREE Consultation or reserve your place on our Discovery Days

Tel: 01962 657 534
www.solutionsdentalclinic.co.uk

Marcus Gambroudes, BDS GDC No. 78063
Lee Butler, Clinical Dental Technician GDC No. 108662
Eduard Gazdov, Dentist GDC No. 210576

Solutions Dental Clinic, 23 Stockbridge Road, Winchester SO22 6RN

Perfect Relaxation

*Visit Guernsey from just £185 per person including flights**

- 0800 316 0314 or email
- book@fermainvalley.com

www.fermainvalley.com

*Please view the website for full terms and conditions.

Fermain Valley
HOTEL GUERNSEY
★ ★ ★ ★

Bathroom Showroom

Simply the Best Luxury For Less

Trade & Public

Expert advice from helpful staff

550 Unit & Basin (Tap extra) £154.00

Rimless WC inc Soft Close Seat £150.00

360 Wash basin (Tap extra) £35.00

Shower Bath Complete inc Panel & Screen £199.00

450 Unit & Basin (Tap extra) £139.00

550 Unit (Tap extra) £70

Complete Bathroom Suite From £199.00

Free Standing Bath From £380.00

Independent Plumbing Supplies

Unit 17 & 18, Belgrave Ind. Est, Belgrave Road, Portswood, Southampton, SO17 3EA

FREE PARKING
FREE DELIVERY

Tel: 02380 679900
All prices exclude VAT

IPS

Jon Dibben crosses the line first to win his gold.

Jon Dibben crosses the line to win gold in the Men's Points Race .

Jon's journey from Totton tot to world cycling champ!

JON Dibben's gold medal at the UCI Track World Championships is the highlight of a cycling career that began as a three year-old in Totton.

The Southampton-born former Hounsdown School and Brockenhurst College pupil has not looked back since first learning to ride a bike in the New Forest in the late Nineties, ***writes SIMON WALTER.***

After his stunning win in the 40km points race last Friday, he could pip Mark Cavendish to a Team GB place for this summer's Rio Olympics.

Jon was part of the team pursuit quartet - including Sir Bradley Wiggins, Owain Doull and Ed Clancy - that had to settle for silver 24 hours earlier.

But the 22 year-old responded by winning the last two of the 16 sprints in the points race to pip Austrian Andreas Graff in a thrilling climax.

There was no-one prouder in London's Olympic Velodrome than Dibben's parents, Jerry and Anne.

Jerry said: "We're absolutely thrilled for him. The lads were quite down after the team pursuit and although Jon's won points races over the winter, he just didn't know how it would go. He said it would go very well or very badly and thankfully it was the former."

Jerry, whose family have been based in Totton for the 30 years, still remembers how his son's love of cycling began.

"We bought him a little mountain bike for his third birthday and he was soon riding it. I was putting his stabilisers on but he soon told me to take them off!

"When he was five we cycled all the way to Lymington from Totton and when he was six he competed in his first race, a junior Wessex Cyclo Cross event.

"He enjoyed the mud and a free Mars bar at the end of each race!"

Jon's mum Anne, who was presented with his victory bouquet for Mother's Day, continues the story. She said: "Jon tried lots of sports, he swam for Romsey & Totton swimming club, he loved rugby and also joined the Chapel Stars junior triathlon club.

"But when his older brother Peter was given a road bike which was too small, Jon was given it as a handy down and it really went from there.

"Jon started riding for the Hargroves team and has been in the British Cycling system since he was 12 or 13."

Jon's gold medal performance came as a surprise to many, but Anne insists it was never in doubt. "Most of the training he did was for the team pursuit so he really didn't know what to expect when he did the points race. But when he says that he usually does very well so I thought he would win every time."

Jon Dibben celebrates with his gold on the podium after winning the Men's Points Race.

Jon Dibben flies the flag after his gold medal win.

Jon Dibben (right) celebrates his gold.

Adil stars in friendly success

ADIL Rashid reflected on a job well done after helping spin England to victory in their World Twenty20 warm-up against New Zealand in Mumbai.

After an eye-catching sojourn in Australia's Big Bash League, the Yorkshire leg-spinner has been tipped as England's main threat in India.

And England's Group One rivals will surely have taken notice of his first outing here, a four-over spell which yielded figures of three for 15 and changed the momentum of the match.

Prior to his introduction the Black Caps were racing away at more than 10-an-over, but he stemmed the flow of runs and picked off key man Kane Williamson, Luke Ronchi and Mitchell Santner.

New Zealand finished with 169 for eight - Hampshire's Reece Topley taking 2-39 - with Jason Roy (55), Alex Hales (44) and Jos Buttler (24no) seeing England to a six-wicket success.

"It was pretty important for us, we look to win every game whether it's a warm-up or not. We always want to play at 100 per cent and this was a good workout," he said.

"If you've got a spinning wicket you've still got to execute your skills and bowl your variations.

"These are different conditions that we've got to adapt to. In India you've got to adjust your lines and lengths and field placings.

"That's why we have these games, to practice that.

"But it all depends on the day and who you come up against, there's different circumstances and either way you've got to do what you do."

As well as Rashid's statement of intent, there were promising signs from Surrey opener Roy.

He struggled for runs in the recent limited-overs series against South Africa and has a top score of 29 from his eight T20 internationals.

The 25-year-old found his timing on this occasion, hitting seven fours and two clean sixes in his 36-ball stay.

"Jason is an explosive player and hopefully this innings will give him plenty of confidence heading into the tournament," said Rashid. "Getting off to a good start in Twenty20 is crucial, and he can do that."

Head coach Trevor Bayliss will be heartened by the efforts of both men, not to mention his finisher Buttler.

England needed 42 off the last four overs, a tricky equation that Buttler made into a canter with 24 runs from just nine deliveries.

But there are question marks over Liam Plunkett, who shipped 19 from his only over and seems vulnerable should England look to add Hampshire's Liam Dawson as a third spin option.

County Championship cricket

Come 2020, and England could boast IPL rival set-up

FAST forward to the year 2020, fittingly enough, and English cricket may have a T20 Premier League to rival the IPL and the Big Bash.

That is the main conclusion to draw from the changes to the domestic game unveiled by the England and Wales Cricket Board earlier this week, ***writes SIMON WALTER.***

Will we see the Solent Super Kings or maybe the Southampton Scorchers preparing for their first season at the Ageas Bowl four years hence?

It would not be surprising, given that from 2017 the county season will be restructured to incorporate the T20 Blast in July and August to maximise children's attendance in the summer holidays.

The times, they are most certainly a changin'. Cricket has always reflected society so it should really be no surprise that the shorter, faster T20 format is the catalyst for more change.

Only two years ago, the T20's 'appointment to view' schedule, with most games played on Friday nights, was the answer.

Revamped

Time will tell how successful the revamped 2017-19 structure will be.

The county season has not just been tinkered with but undergone radical change to allow the T20 Blast to maximise its accessibility to the next generation.

Overseas stars will be able to commit to a tournament in a school-holiday window far easier than is now the case, with fixtures currently spread over three months.

Let's hope a terrestrial freeview channel takes this a step further by screening games live, a key factor in the growth of Australia's Big Bash.

To allow this to happen, the Specsavers County Championship has been reduced from 16 to 14 matches per county.

It will be fascinating to see the 2017 fixture list when it is released in November, when we will have more clarity on the new structure.

What we do know is that the season will begin with more 50-over cricket in April and May, leading up to a July final.

Anyone who was at Lord's to see Hampshire win the Friends Provident Trophy against Sussex in 2009 will know this is a good move.

It will dilute the advantage of winning the toss and there is also a better chance of glorious weather.

Hampshire celebrate a T20 wicket. One day England may have a league to rival the IPL or Australian Big Bash.

I like to think a cup final in July would be watched by a capacity crowd, which has not been the case at recent September 'showpieces'.

While the limited-overs competitions will be given more prominence, the Championship has been downgraded.

It is not a decision that has been made with the purists in mind. It is all about embracing the future, not hankering after the past.

That said it is still a shame that the second division has had to be devalued to the extent that ten teams will only play 14 games.

In other words, the second division counties will only play home and away against five of the other nine. Maybe the decision has been made in the belief that two or more will merge at some point.

Hopefully that is not the case, but the inevitable next step in T20's evolution is the introduction of divisions.

When that happens it will become even more difficult for the smaller counties.

But there is nothing wrong with 'only' playing 14 Championship matches a season.

There are only six states, each playing ten first-class games a season, in Australia's Sheffield Shield, which is why the Big Bash was so easy to incorporate. And the Aussies aren't too bad across the formats.

In this case I think less is more. The quality of the Championship matches may well increase with the help of more rest and recovery time. The eight top-flight counties should be able to play their first-class matches with more intensity.

And the season should be easier to follow.

But for now the priority for a Hampshire squad currently training in Barbados must be to start the season in the form they showed during their 'Great Escape' to ensure they dine at the Championship's top table from 2017.

The main changes coming to county cricket ...

County cricket changes

Eight Division One teams and 10 in Division Two.

Two summer-holiday blocks for the NatWest T20 Blast and an early-season slot for the Royal London One-Day Cup

The County Championship will be run in segments of fixtures, pausing first during April and May for the RL Cup group stage and then in July and August for the Blast, pushed back into the school-holiday months.

The amendments to the championship season structure are the most significant since the 126-year-old competition split into two divisions in 2000.

The RL Cup faces the biggest diary move - with the group winners progressing to a semi-final and second and third in each table facing a quarter-final before a Lord's showpiece in July.

That block of early-summer 50-over cricket may well impact on the future staging of May Test matches.

Tennis' doping scandals

MARIA Sharapova shocked the sporting world by announcing at a press conference in Los Angeles this week she had failed a drugs test at the Australian Open.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at other high-profile doping cases in tennis.

MARIN CILIC:The Croatian was given a nine-month ban in 2013 after the International Tennis Federation (ITF) said traces of banned stimulant nikethamide were found in a sample he gave at a tournament in Munich. Cilic claimed the failed test was a result of taking over-the-counter glucose tablets, but argued only a by-product of the banned substance had been found. He took his case to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and the ban was reduced to four months. Cilic won his first grand slam title at the US Open the following year.

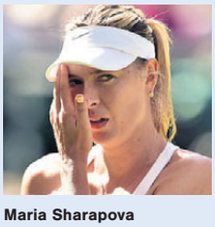
VIKTOR TROICKI:Another recent and controversial case. Troicki refused to take a blood test at a tournament in Monte Carlo in 2013, claiming he was feeling unwell and had a phobia of needles. He was banned for 18 months, reduced to 12 on an appeal to CAS. Troicki vociferously maintained his innocence, claiming he had been told by the doping control officer he could take the test the following day. Novak Djokovic spoke out in impassioned defence of his friend, calling it an injustice.

RICHARD GASQUET: Gasquet tested positive for cocaine in 2009 and was banned for 12 months by the ITF. He also took his case to CAS and successfully argued that he had ingested the substance inadvertently after kissing a woman in a nightclub. He was cleared of any wrongdoing.

ANDRE AGASSI:Agassi made the shocking revelation in his post-retirement autobiography that he failed a test in 1997 after taking crystal meth and then lied to tennis authorities to escape punishment. He told the ATP in a letter he had taken the drug accidentally. The governing body believed him and the failed test remained a secret for the rest of Agassi's playing career.

GREG RUSEDSKI:The former British number one was among a number of players to test positive for the steroid nandrolone in 2003. He was cleared of wrongdoing after a tribunal ruled he, along with the other players, had taken the drug inadvertently in contaminated pills handed out by ATP trainers.

MARTINA HINGIS; Having initially retired in 2003 at the age of 22, Hingis returned to tennis two years later only for her comeback to be abruptly ended in 2007 by a positive test for a metabolite of cocaine at Wimbledon. She was suspended for two years but made another comeback in 2013 and is now ranked No1 in the world in doubles.



Maria Sharapova

SATURDAY'S FOOTBALL RESULTS AND TABLES

FA Cup Sixth Round

Everton L — **Chelsea** L

Barclays Premier League

AFC Bournemouth 3 — **Swansea** 2
Gradel 37, King 50, Cook 78 — Barrow 39, Sigurdsson 62
HT 1-1 — Att 11,179

Norwich 0 — **Man City** 0
HT 0-0 — Att 26,323

Stoke 1 — **SAINTS** 2
Arnautovic 52 — Pelle 11,30
HT 0-2 — Att 27,833

Sunderlnd P — **Everton** P
Postponed - due to FA Cup.

West Ham P — **Watford** P
Postponed - due to FA Cup.

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Leicester	29	8	5	1	24	15	9	4	2	28	16	60
Tottenham	29	8	5	2	27	12	7	5	2	24	12	55
Arsenal	29	8	3	3	19	10	7	4	4	27	20	52
Man City	29	10	1	4	39	17	5	5	4	13	14	51
West Ham	29	7	5	2	22	14	6	5	4	23	19	49
Man Utd	29	8	4	2	19	7	5	4	6	18	20	47
SAINTS	**30**	**7**	**3**	**5**	**25**	**16**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**13**	**14**	**44**
Liverpool	28	5	5	3	19	17	7	3	5	24	20	44
Stoke	30	7	2	6	17	16	5	5	5	15	20	43
Chelsea	29	5	6	4	27	22	5	4	5	16	17	40
W.B.A.	29	6	4	5	19	20	4	5	5	11	16	39
Everton	28	4	4	7	29	26	5	7	1	22	13	38
Bournemouth	30	5	4	6	20	23	5	4	6	18	24	38
Watford	29	5	4	6	13	12	5	3	6	16	18	37
Crystal P	29	4	2	9	16	21	5	4	5	16	18	33
Swansea	30	5	5	5	14	18	3	4	8	16	22	33
Sunderlnd	29	4	4	6	17	16	2	3	10	18	38	25
Norwich	30	4	5	6	19	22	2	2	11	12	32	25
Newcastle	28	4	5	5	21	21	2	1	11	7	32	24
A. Villa	29	2	4	8	11	23	1	3	11	11	32	16

SkyBet Championship

Blackburn 1 — **Leeds Utd** 2
Jackson 89 — Bamba 34, Antenucci 69
HT 0-1 — Att 16,017

Bolton 1 — **Preston** 2
Trotter 22 — Hugill 57, Vermijl 86
HT 1-0 — Att 18,423

Cardiff 1 — **Ipswich** 0
Ecuele Manga 18
HT 1-0 — Att 15,175

Fulham 1 — **Bristol C** 2
McCormack 3 — Pack 69, Tomlin 90
HT 1-0 — Att 20,316

Huddersfld 1 — **Burnley** 3
Lolley 44 — Ward 14, Vokes 30, Mee 45
HT 1-3

Hull 1 — **M K Dons** 1
Clucas 53 — Kay 51
HT 0-0 — Att 16,183

Nottm For 0 — **Sheff Wed** 3
McGeady 30, Hooper 62, Marco Matias 85
HT 0-1 — Att 20,690

Q.P.R. 3 — **Brentford** 0
Hoilett 38, Polter 66, Chery 71
HT 1-0 — Att 17,894

Rotherham 3 — **Derby Cty** 3
D Ward 83, Best 85,90 — Ince 55,65, Martin 63
HT 0-0 — Att 11,163

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Burnley	37	13	3	2	34	12	8	8	3	26	18	74
Middlesbro	35	12	3	2	26	6	8	4	6	21	15	67
Hull	35	11	5	1	31	7	8	3	7	18	14	65
Brighton	36	12	3	3	27	15	5	11	2	22	19	65
Derby Cty	37	9	6	3	27	13	7	7	5	23	22	61
Sheff Wed	37	10	6	2	33	15	5	8	6	20	21	59
Cardiff	37	10	7	2	28	17	5	6	7	20	23	58
Ipswich	36	7	6	4	21	17	8	4	7	23	26	55
Birminghm	35	9	2	6	19	16	6	7	5	21	18	54
Preston	37	7	7	4	17	15	6	6	7	18	19	52
Q.P.R.	37	8	8	3	31	20	4	6	8	15	22	50
Leeds Utd	36	5	7	6	15	18	6	7	5	21	23	47
Wolves	36	6	6	6	24	25	6	4	8	21	25	46
Nottm For	36	7	6	6	22	19	4	6	7	11	15	45
Reading	35	7	8	3	20	12	4	3	10	21	29	44
Blackburn	36	7	7	5	23	16	3	6	8	13	18	43
Brentford	36	7	3	8	24	26	5	4	9	24	32	43
Huddersfld	37	7	4	8	29	24	4	5	9	19	28	42
Bristol C	37	4	6	8	17	29	6	4	9	17	29	40
Fulham	37	5	5	9	30	31	3	8	7	26	32	37
M K Dons	37	7	3	8	17	23	2	7	10	14	26	37
Rotherham	37	7	4	8	28	31	3	2	13	15	31	36
Charlton	36	3	8	7	18	27	3	3	12	14	39	29
Bolton	37	4	10	5	22	23	0	4	14	14	39	26

SkyBet League One

Barnsley 0 — **Southend** 2
Payne 4, Timlin 90
HT 0-1 — Att 9,903

Blackpool 0 — **Coventry** 1
Fortune 26
HT 0-1 — Att 8,869

Bradford 2 — **Doncaster** 1
Proctor 7,49 — Tyson 90
HT 1-0

Burton Albion 2 — **Fleetwood Town** 1
Duffy 26,63 — Burns 47
HT 1-0 — Att 4,415

Chesterfld 1 — **Walsall** 4
O'Connor 19 og — Anderson 35 og, Mantom 57,75, Hiwula 71
HT 1-1 — Att 6,938

Colchester 3 — **Wigan** 3
Gilbey 40, Lee 50, Moncur 60 pen — Wildschut 36, Colclough 44, Grigg 90
HT 1-2 — Att 3,761

Gillingham 3 — **Crewe** 0
Samuel 12, Guthrie 61 og, Wright 90
HT 1-0 — Att 5,656

Peterboro 2 — **Port Vale** 3
Taylor 2, Williams 41 — Moore 49, Hooper 86, Dodds 89
HT 2-0 — Att 4,942

Rochdale 3 — **Bury** 0
Mendez-Laing 11,17, Eastham 53
HT 2-0 — Att 4,538

Sheff Utd 3 — **Oldham** 0
Brayford 10, Flynn 21, Sharp 77
HT 2-0 — Att 18,334

Shrewsbry 2 — **Scunthorpe** 2
KaiKai 21, Akpa Akpro 90 — Wootton 69, Madden 78
HT 1-0 — Att 5,028

Swindon 2 — **Millwall** 2
Ajose 63 pen, Doughty 90 — Gregory 6, Morison 11
HT 0-2 — Att 8,623

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Burton Albion	36	12	4	2	28	13	10	1	7	18	18	71
Wigan	36	10	6	2	31	12	7	8	3	28	22	65
Gillingham	36	13	3	2	37	15	5	5	8	26	28	62
Walsall	35	7	5	6	22	22	10	6	1	32	15	62
Millwall	36	8	3	7	24	21	9	5	4	33	22	59
Bradford	36	9	5	4	23	16	7	5	6	20	21	58
Coventry	36	9	5	4	35	21	6	5	7	23	19	55
Barnsley	36	9	2	7	29	19	8	2	8	28	29	55
Port Vale	37	10	7	1	28	14	5	3	11	16	27	55
Southend	36	9	3	6	24	20	6	6	6	24	24	54
Sheff Utd	36	9	2	7	32	25	5	8	5	20	22	52
Rochdale	36	10	3	5	29	19	4	6	8	19	27	51
Scunthorpe	36	8	5	5	17	13	6	4	8	25	29	51
Swindon	35	8	3	7	33	30	6	4	7	22	23	49
Bury	36	8	7	3	29	21	5	2	11	16	37	48
Peterboro	36	6	4	8	30	31	7	2	9	30	28	45
Shrewsbry	36	5	3	10	22	26	7	5	6	22	28	44
Chesterfld	36	4	4	10	28	33	8	1	9	19	25	41
Fleetwood Tn	35	7	6	4	28	16	3	4	11	15	29	40
Doncaster	36	5	6	7	21	20	4	4	10	16	29	37
Blackpool	36	7	4	8	19	18	2	4	11	14	29	35
Oldham	34	2	5	9	17	30	4	11	3	16	17	34
Crewe	36	3	6	9	18	32	3	6	9	19	31	30
Colchester	36	3	8	7	26	33	3	2	13	19	51	28

SkyBet League Two

Acc Stanley 2 — **Plymouth** 1
Kee 85 pen, McCartan 90 — Jervis 23
HT 0-1 — Att 2,044

Bristol R 1 — **Mansfield** 0
Taylor 61
HT 0-0 — Att 7,847

Exeter L — **Carlisle** L
Stockley 7 — Wyke 27
HT 1-1 — Att 3,375

Hartlepool 3 — **Dagenham** 1
Paynter 4 pen, Carroll 14, Gray 53 — Cash 33
HT 2-1 — Att 3,947

Luton 0 — **Crawley** 1
Harrold 12
HT 0-1 — Att 8,264

Morecambe 2 — **AFC Wimbledon** 1
Fleming 76, Devitt 80 pen — Francomb 90
HT 0-0 — Att 1,477

Northmptn 1 — **Cambridge** 1
Marquis 71 — Spencer 90
HT 0-0 — Att 5,828

Oxford Utd 0 — **Leyton O** 1
McAnuff 74
HT 0-0 — Att 7,102

POMPEY 0 — **Newport County** 3
Jones 34, Boden 69, Morgan 87
HT 0-1 — Att 16,245

Wycombe 1 — **Stevenage** 0
O'Nien 70
HT 0-0 — Att 3,715

Yeovil 1 — **Notts Cnty** 0
Zoko 50
HT 0-0 — Att 3,588

York 1 — **Barnet** 1
Alessandra 20 — Akinde 37
HT 1-1 — Att 2,890

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Northmptn	36	12	3	3	29	14	12	4	2	36	21	79
Oxford Utd	36	7	6	5	25	16	11	5	2	36	19	65
Plymouth	36	10	3	5	28	18	9	5	4	23	14	65
Bristol R	36	10	2	6	28	18	9	3	6	24	18	62
Acc Stanley	35	9	5	3	35	26	8	4	6	23	17	60
POMPEY	**36**	**7**	**7**	**4**	**29**	**14**	**8**	**7**	**3**	**28**	**20**	**59**
Leyton O	36	8	4	6	27	24	7	7	4	25	24	56
Wycombe	35	8	4	6	22	20	8	3	6	16	12	55
Wimbledon	36	7	4	7	25	23	7	7	4	28	22	53
Mansfield	36	6	6	6	25	22	8	3	7	21	20	51
Carlisle	34	8	5	4	31	26	5	7	5	21	24	51
Cambridge	36	8	3	7	25	26	6	6	6	25	22	51
Luton	36	5	5	8	21	24	9	3	6	29	25	50
Exeter	35	5	7	5	24	25	8	2	8	21	24	48
Barnet	36	10	3	5	26	18	3	5	10	22	34	47
Crawley	36	8	4	6	20	19	5	2	11	21	37	45
Morecambe	36	6	2	10	28	33	5	5	8	29	31	40
Newport Co	35	4	6	7	19	26	6	4	8	20	23	40
Notts Cnty	35	7	3	7	26	27	4	4	10	20	31	40
Yeovil	36	5	7	6	21	23	4	4	10	15	24	38
Stevenage	36	5	5	8	19	28	3	5	10	23	32	34
Hartlepool	33	6	3	9	21	26	4	1	10	15	29	34
York	36	5	4	9	25	32	1	5	12	13	35	27
Dagenham	36	1	5	12	11	29	4	5	9	23	32	25

Ladbrokes Scottish Prem

Aberdeen 2 — **Kilmarnock** 1
Taylor 37, Logan 71 — Magennis 47
HT 1-0 — Att 13,725

Dundee 0 — **Hearts** 1
Walker 53
HT 0-0 — Att 6,195

Inverness CT 0 — **Hamilton** 1
Morris 59
HT 0-0 — Att 3,510

Partick 1 — **Celtic** 2
Welsh 85 pen — Griffiths 45, McGregor 54
HT 0-1 — Att 7,238

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Celtic	29	11	3	1	41	8	9	3	2	31	15	66
Aberdeen	30	10	4	1	23	13	10	1	4	28	19	65
Hearts	29	10	3	1	31	12	6	5	4	20	14	56
Ross Cnty	29	8	0	7	27	26	4	3	7	17	20	39
St Johnstn	29	6	5	4	21	19	5	1	8	23	27	39
Motherwell	30	6	3	6	22	22	5	2	8	14	23	38
Dundee	29	5	5	4	22	18	3	7	5	18	25	36
Partick	29	5	2	7	16	21	4	5	6	13	16	34
Inverness CT	29	5	4	5	15	14	3	5	7	19	27	33
Hamilton	30	3	6	6	18	20	5	3	7	15	29	33
Kilmarnock	30	3	4	8	14	30	4	3	8	16	23	28
Dundee Utd	29	3	2	10	16	25	2	3	9	14	28	20

Ladbrokes Scottish Ch'ship

Alloa 1 — **Raith** 1
Hetherington 64 — Benedictus 90
HT 0-0 — Att 762

Dumbarton L — **Falkirk** L
HT L-L

Hibernian P — **Livingston** P
Postponed - due to Scottish League Cup.

St Mirren 2 — **Queen Sth** 1
Mallan 30 pen, Tapping 63 og — Oliver 62
HT 1-0 — Att 3,888

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Rangers	28	14	1	0	42	9	9	2	2	31	9	72
Falkirk	28	10	3	1	25	7	6	6	2	21	14	57
Hibernian	27	10	2	1	24	10	7	2	5	19	14	55
Raith	28	9	2	4	24	13	3	4	6	12	23	42
Queen Sth	27	6	3	5	15	21	4	1	8	10	15	34
Morton	28	4	3	6	8	14	4	5	6	21	21	32
St Mirren	28	4	4	6	16	21	4	3	7	13	18	31
Dumbarton	27	6	1	6	17	27	2	3	9	8	20	28
Livingston	28	2	5	7	11	15	4	1	9	18	24	24
Alloa	29	0	4	10	8	31	3	1	11	8	32	14

Ladbrokes Scottish Lge 1

Airdrieonians 0 — **Brechin** 2
Jackson 43, Spence 66
HT 0-1 — Att 671

Albion R 0 — **Stranraer** 1
Longworth 38
HT 0-1 — Att 408

Ayr Utd 0 — **Dunfrmline** 2
El Bakhtaoui 62,68
HT 0-0 — Att 2,190

Forfar 1 — **Cowdenbth** 1
Ryan 3 — Spence 4
HT 1-1 — Att 525

Stenhsmuir 1 — **Peterhead** 4
Martinez 81 — Stevenson 13, Sutherland 43,54 pen, McIntosh 67
HT 0-2 — Att 369

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Dunfrmline	29	10	3	2	39	12	10	3	1	35	8	66
Peterhead	29	8	5	1	38	15	7	5	3	32	19	55
Ayr Utd	29	10	2	3	36	17	6	2	6	18	21	52
Airdrieonians	29	4	3	8	14	19	7	2	5	24	24	38
Albion R	29	6	4	5	22	18	4	4	6	9	19	38
Stranraer	29	4	2	8	9	23	7	3	5	21	21	38
Stenhsmuir	29	5	3	7	22	34	4	3	7	16	32	33
Cowdenbth	29	5	3	6	23	23	3	2	10	18	43	29
Forfar	29	3	3	8	18	23	3	6	6	19	25	27
Brechin	29	4	4	6	20	22	3	2	10	14	31	27

Ladbrokes Scottish Lge 2

Arbroath 3 — **E Stirling** 0
Wilson 11, Whatley 69, Williams 73
HT 1-0 — Att 609

Berwick 1 — **Stirling A** 0
Henderson 1
HT 1-0 — Att 502

Clyde 1 — **Elgin** 0
Marsh 15
HT 1-0 — Att 611

East Fife 4 — **Annan Athletic** 2
Insall 4,69, Page 6,58 — Weatherson 49, Osadolor 81
HT 2-0 — Att 600

Montrose 1 — **Queen Park** 1
Fraser 47 — Woods 16
HT 0-1 — Att 434

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
East Fife	29	9	2	4	25	15	6	3	5	25	22	50
Elgin	29	11	2	1	28	10	4	2	9	20	29	49
Clyde	28	7	1	5	20	15	7	3	5	22	16	46
Queen Park	28	5	4	5	15	12	7	4	3	20	11	44
Annan Ath	27	6	6	2	32	25	5	1	7	18	21	40
Stirling A	29	7	2	5	22	14	4	4	7	17	20	39
Berwick	29	7	4	4	22	22	3	2	9	14	25	36
Montrose	29	8	3	4	28	25	2	3	9	16	32	36
Arbroath	29	5	3	7	18	18	5	2	7	18	19	35
E Stirling	29	6	0	8	19	30	2	3	10	16	34	27

FA Trophy Semi-final First Leg

Bognor Regis Town 0 — **Grimsby** 1
Arnold 75
HT 0-0 — Att 2,629

Nantwich T L — **FC Halifax** L
Cooke 44, Kosylo 77 — McManus 3, Fairhurst 21, Burrow 46,61
HT 1-2 — Att 2,078

Vanarama National League

Aldershot 0 — **Torquay** 0
HT 0-0 — Att 1,771

Barrow 3 — **Altrncham** 2
Livesey 44, Cook 61, Tomlinson 67 — Sinnott 19, Lawrie 69
HT 1-1 — Att 1,019

Bromley 2 — **Guiseley** 0
Goldberg 70,83
HT 0-0 — Att 1,044

Cheltnham 4 — **Woking** 0
Holman 32,38,58,64
HT 2-0 — Att 2,951

Dover 0 — **Tranmere** 0
HT 0-0 — Att 1,460

EASTLEIGH 1 — **Chester FC** 0
Tubbs 70 pen
HT 0-0 — Att 1,831

Gateshead 0 — **Forest Grn** 1
Jennings 13
HT 0-1 — Att 887

Macclesfld 1 — **Lincoln City** 1
Whitehead 50 — McCombe 16
HT 0-1 — Att 1,676

Southport 3 — **Welling U** 3
Phenix 37, Thompson 57, O'Brien 59 — Bakare 74, Kabba 82, Gayle 89
HT 1-0 — Att 746

Wrexham 1 — **Boreham W** 0
Jennings 13 pen
HT 1-0 — Att 3,470

		HOME					AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Cheltnham	38	13	5	1	37	10	11	6	2	34	14	83
Forest Grn	38	15	1	3	36	14	10	5	4	27	21	81
Grimsby	35	12	5	2	42	14	7	6	3	26	15	68
Tranmere	38	10	1	7	24	16	7	10	3	26	21	62
Braintree Tn	35	10	4	4	18	11	7	6	4	23	15	61
Wrexham	37	11	4	4	41	22	6	4	8	20	22	59
Dover	35	10	4	4	32	19	7	4	6	27	26	59
EASTLEIGH	**36**	**10**	**3**	**4**	**24**	**20**	**7**	**5**	**7**	**30**	**28**	**59**
Gateshead	37	8	4	7	27	30	9	3	6	21	25	58
Lincoln City	37	9	6	4	31	18	6	5	7	26	29	56
Bromley	37	10	3	6	33	19	6	3	9	27	39	54
Macclesfld	37	7	4	7	22	18	8	1	10	27	25	50
Woking	38	8	5	6	31	23	6	2	11	27	32	49
Barrow	36	8	6	4	28	23	4	4	10	20	39	46
Aldershot	37	6	4	8	16	21	7	3	9	26	36	46
Chester FC	37	7	7	5	32	23	4	3	11	18	31	43
Southport	38	5	5	9	25	36	6	5	8	13	18	43
Guiseley	36	6	5	6	21	26	3	8	8	13	27	40
Boreham W	37	3	6	10	14	22	5	6	7	16	15	36
FC Halifax	35	4	8	6	30	38	5	1	11	18	31	36
Altrncham	36	6	7	5	23	27	2	4	12	13	34	35
Torquay	35	4	3	9	19	29	4	7	8	21	33	34
Welling U	38	4	6	9	18	26	2	4	13	12	30	28
Kiddrmnstr	37	4	4	10	18	25	1	5	13	19	36	24

Vanarama National Lge Sth

BASINGSTKE 1 — **Havant and W** 1
Connolly 70 — Swallow 45
HT 0-1 — Att 523

Bath City 1 — **Ebbsfleet United** 1
Kelly 89 pen — Parkes 76
HT 0-0 — Att 558

B Stortfrd 1 — **Eastbourne Borough** 1
Moore 26 — Haysman 48
HT 1-0 — Att 313

Chelmsford 4 — **Maidenhead Utd** 1
Bricknell 23, Bridge 28,79, Daley 75 — Comley 59
HT 2-0 — Att 1,140

Dartford 2 — **Whitehawk** 4
Pugh 45,50 — Mills 54,81,90, Neilson 90
HT 1-0 — Att 906

Gosport Borough L — **Concord Rgs** L
Wooden 32 — Cawley 44
HT 1-1

Hayes & Yeading 1 — **St Albans** 3
Ehui 79 — MacDonald 8, Theophanous 32, Anderson 58
HT 0-2 — Att 188

H Hempstead L — **Truro City** L
Montgomery 13,76 — Green 44
HT 1-1 — Att 563

Margate L — **Oxford C** L
Whichelow 39
HT 0-1

Sutton Utd 0 — **Weston-S-Mare** 0
HT 0-0 — Att 850

Wealdstone 2 — **Maidstone Utd** 2
Harriott 34, Wright 56 — Healy 11, Davies 40
HT 1-2 — Att 815

POOLS CHECK

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
L	L	2	L	1	2	1	1	1	1	L	1	1	1	1	3●	L	1	1	1	1	1	3●	1	1

26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
1	1	3●	3●	1	1	L	1	1	1	3●	1	1	1	1	3●	L	1	1	1	1	3●	L	1

RTSFC and Saints Foundation Coaching Academy

What can the course lead to?

Students who successfully complete the course are guaranteed an interview for a sports coach position with the Saints Foundation. Students may also choose to pursue other opportunities in the sports coaching industry, or progress onto higher education.

What are the entry requirements?

To join the course you need:

- 5 GCSE's at grade C or above, including English and Maths
- An interest in coaching, teaching or leading physical activities

How can I apply?

There are only 20 spaces available on the course, so don't delay in applying – visit **www.richardtaunton.ac.uk** or click the QR code below to apply online!

To find out more about this exciting new course, please attend our Coaching Academy Information Evening on Monday 14th March, from 6-8pm at St Mary's Stadium

RICHARD TAUNTON
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

02380 511811
richardtaunton.ac.uk
HILL LANE SOUTHAMPTON SO15 5RL
www.saintsfoundation.co.uk

Saints FOUNDATION
INSPIRES · SUPPORTS · DELIVERS

Saints FOUNDATION
INSPIRES • SUPPORTS • DELIVERS

RTSFC and Saints Foundation Coaching Academy

Richard Taunton Sixth Form College and the Saints Foundation (the official charity of Southampton FC) are working together to deliver the first Coaching Academy in Southampton. This full time, 2-year course is aimed at 16-19 year olds who want to work in the sports coaching industry.

What does the course involve?

The course combines academic studies and sports coaching qualifications with invaluable practical coaching experience. The course is divided into 2 elements:

- Spending time at RTSFC, learning about sports coaching and fitness
- Spending time on work placement with the Saints Foundation, supporting the delivery of multi-sport sessions in the community

What qualifications will you gain?

- BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Sports Development, Coaching and Fitness (equivalent to 2 A Levels)
- FA Junior Football Leaders award
- FA Level 1 and Level 2 award in Coaching Football
- FA Level 2 award in Leadership in Football
- 1st4Sport Level 2 award in Multi-Skills Development in Sport

RICHARD TAUNTON
SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

02380 511811
www.richardtaunton.ac.uk
HILL LANE SOUTHAMPTON SO15 5RL
www.saintsfoundation.co.uk

Saints FOUNDATION
INSPIRES • SUPPORTS • DELIVERS